



# MONITORING AND EVALUATION SUPPORT FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND ADAPTING (MESCLA) ACTIVITY

## PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF FEED THE FUTURE ACTIVITIES IN HONDURAS, *ALIANZA PARA EL CORREDOR SECO* AND ACCESS TO MARKETS: FINAL REPORT

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Performance Evaluation of Feed the Future Programs in Honduras,  
*Alianza para el Corredor Seco and ACCESS to MARKETS*: Final Report

Prepared by:

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January 10, 2020

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## ACRONYM LIST

|           |                                                                       |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ACS-USAID | <i>Alianza Para El Corredor Seco</i>                                  |
| FGD       | Focus Group Discussion                                                |
| FtF       | Feed the Future                                                       |
| HH        | Household                                                             |
| IP        | Implementing Partner                                                  |
| IR        | Intermediate Result                                                   |
| KII       | Key Informant Interview                                               |
| LT        | Learning Theme                                                        |
| LQ        | Learning Question                                                     |
| MESCLA    | Monitoring & Evaluation Support For Collaborative Learning & Adapting |
| NZOI      | Northern Zone Of Influence                                            |
| OLS       | Ordinary Least Squares                                                |
| PE        | Performance Evaluation                                                |
| SOW       | Statement of Work                                                     |
| SZOI      | Southern Zone Of Influence                                            |
| USAID     | United States Agency For International Development                    |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings, conclusions and recommendations from a performance evaluation of two United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Feed the Future (FtF) activities in Honduras: ACCESS to Markets and the *Alianza para el Corredor Seco* (ACS-USAID) Activity. The evaluation was conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago under the Monitoring and Evaluation Support for Collaborative Learning and Adapting (MESCLA) activity. It draws on household survey data collected by the Activity implementers over 2015-2018, and qualitative data collected in 2019.

### ACCESS TO MARKETS AND ACS-USAID ACTIVITY BACKGROUND

ACCESS to Markets is a five-year USAID/Feed the Future activity implemented during 2014-2019 in the three contiguous departments of Santa Bárbara, Copán and Ocotepeque in USAID's Northern Zone of Influence (NZOI). ACCESS to Markets was established with two main purposes: To increase inclusive agricultural sector growth and to improve nutrition status, especially for women and children. This is achieved through several activities, including: (1) technical assistance and training in production, postharvest, management, and marketing techniques; (2) improving market access by linking smallholders with input suppliers and buyers; (3) increasing financial literacy and access to rural financial services; (4) eliminating policy constraints that impede market access; (5) improving utilization and consumption of healthy foods, improving living conditions, and reducing health problems; and (6) providing health and nutrition training and services to improve outreach and effectiveness of community health and volunteer services. As of September 2018, the activity was assisting a total of 28,137 household clients.

The *Alianza para el Corredor Seco* (ACS-USAID) activity is a five-year USAID/Feed the Future activity implemented during 2015-2020 in the three contiguous departments of La Paz, Intibucá, and Lempira in USAID's Southern Zone of Influence (SZOI). The Honduran Strategic Investment Office, INVEST-H (formerly known as the Millennium Challenge Account Honduras MCA-H), is responsible for the management and implementation of ACS. ACS-USAID was established with two main purposes that mirror those of the ACCESS to Markets activity. As of March 2018, the activity was assisting 21,321 household clients.

### EVALUATION PURPOSE AND LEARNING QUESTIONS

USAID/Honduras commissioned this evaluation to address several broad learning themes and questions put forth by USAID/Honduras. The purpose of this performance evaluation of the FtF activities is to provide evidence on and better understand household economic status and poverty trajectories, FtF programming effectiveness and impacts, and reasons why. The intended uses of this evaluation are to inform the design and implementation of future activities that aim to use integrated agricultural production and investment, health and nutrition synergies to improve poverty alleviation and malnutrition.

The evaluation team was tasked with undertaking analyses to answer fifteen evaluation questions that were proposed by USAID/Honduras across six learning themes.

## ***Evaluation Learning Themes and Questions<sup>1</sup>***

### ***Theme 1: Paths and timelines for leaving poverty***

1. What factors are associated with households that move above and stay above the poverty line of \$2.42 per person per day? What differentiates successful households from the rest? In addition, what factors are associated with households within each of the three starting income categories below the poverty line that were defined by the project (< \$1.25, \$1.25-\$1.81, and \$1.81-\$2.42 per person per day)?
2. What are the paths and timelines for families to leave poverty, and to move across the three starting income categories defined by the project? What are the patterns (including gender dynamics) for families that do not leave poverty or move out of their starting income category?
3. Is it possible that the focus and intensity of the effort can meet project objectives for increasing income and reducing malnutrition? If not, why not? If yes, what assumptions must be met?

### ***Theme 2: Contribution to asset growth, wealth formation and economic development***

4. Has the FtF intervention influenced asset growth and working capital increase? If so, has it been used for long-term wealth formation, invested in working capital to expand production or has it been used to generate income to cover household costs or to confront climate shocks?
5. To what extent does spending or investment decisions around production affect the poverty level of households?

### ***Theme 3: Gender***

6. To what extent have FtF interventions impacted women's empowerment<sup>2</sup> in agriculture?
7. Have the gender strategy and actions of FtF had an impact on patterns of poverty?
8. Is there an observable difference between the results achieved through the different ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets implementation of the gender strategies?

### ***Theme 4: Effectiveness in the integration of agricultural and nutrition components***

9. Is there a difference in the nutrition results among families that received only the agricultural component and those that received both the agricultural and nutritional component?
10. If so, are these differences the result of value added by the nutritional component?

### ***Theme 5: Effectiveness of the irrigation strategy***

11. Does irrigation committees' participation in compensation for ecosystem services influence the sustainability of the irrigation system?
12. Has additional investment in irrigation projects had an impact on the use and management of water in the zone of influence? If yes, what was that impact?
13. Does access to drip irrigation affect the income level of a household? If so, has this change (in household income) had an impact on health and resiliency?

### ***Theme 6: Resilience and sustainability***

14. Have FtF investments in Honduras increased the capacity of poor household beneficiaries (below \$2.42/person/day) to mitigate economic and climatic shocks? What types of interventions are the most and least helpful?
15. How has FtF contributed to ensuring sustainability (and increasing resiliency)<sup>3</sup>?

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<sup>1</sup> This list of learning themes and questions reflect updates agreed to by USAID, MESCLA and NORC as of 6/12/2019. The changes to questions in the evaluation team's SOW reflect limitations to answering some of the learning questions with the household survey data made available to NORC, and revised USAID learning interests.

<sup>2</sup> Following IP documentation on gender strategy and indicators, women's empowerment is conceptualized in terms of increased access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment). The evaluation also examines changes to women's roles in agricultural and household decision-making.

<sup>3</sup> This refers to institutional, community, and household levels. Sustainability may include capacity to respond to shocks.

## EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The quantitative component of the PE is comprised of analysis of household survey data of activity beneficiaries during 2015-2018 that was designed and collected by the ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID activity implementers, and provided to the evaluation team for analysis. The qualitative component of the PE is designed and led by the evaluation team, and draws on qualitative data collected in 2019 from beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries within client households, implementing partners and other key stakeholders.

The main source of qualitative data for the evaluation was collected from activity beneficiaries, through 48 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 69 key informant interviews (KIIs) held across the six departments where ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID are implemented. The household survey datasets used for this evaluation consist of three rounds of baseline data, collected in 2015, 2016, and 2017, and three rounds of results collected in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The analytic sample for this evaluation consists of 1,079 households in the ACCESS to Markets sample and 1,037 households in the ACS-USAID sample.

The evaluation team conducted multivariate regression analyses to examine changes in outcome variables over time while controlling for background characteristics at baseline. Because there are no observations for non-participants in the activities, the analyses cannot compare outcomes between participants and non-participants to examine impacts of the ACCESS to Markets and the ACS-USAID activities. However, the evaluation team took advantage of variation in exposure to the FtF activities across different cohorts of households in the data provided to the evaluation team to examine correlations between outcome variables and length of program participation.

Limitations and sources of bias for this pre-post evaluation design include lack of a valid counterfactual, several issues with the quality of the survey data provided to the evaluation team, response bias, recall bias and selection bias. These are further discussed in the report body.

## EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Key findings and conclusions are summarized by Learning Theme in the table below.

### Key Findings and Conclusions by Learning Theme

| Learning Theme                                                     | Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Conclusions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
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| <b>Theme 1:<br/>Paths and timelines for leaving poverty</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater years of exposure to the FtF activity is associated with a higher probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line during the FtF lifetime.</li> <li><u>ACCESS to Markets</u>: each additional year of exposure to the FtF activity was associated with a \$0.34 increase in household per capita income per day (i.e. an increase per year of 19 percent of the baseline average ACCESS to Markets per capita income of \$1.81 per day). Each additional year of exposure to the FtF activity was also associated with a seven percent greater probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line.</li> <li><u>ACS-USAID</u>: each additional year of exposure to the FtF activity was associated with a \$0.19 increase in household per capita income per day (i.e. an increase per year of 14 percent of the baseline average ACS-USAID per capita income of \$1.38 per day) and a 3.7 percent greater probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line.</li> <li>Gains in per capita daily income among beneficiaries in different income categories were consistent with the FtF activity objectives. Households in the lower income category at baseline were more likely to move up compared to those in the upper income categories.</li> <li>Qualitative results also suggest that many FtF activity beneficiaries have seen income and economic well-being improvements during the FtF activity lifetime, which they link to knowledge, practices and other FtF activity support. There is strong qualitative evidence that income gains derived from FtF's improved farming practices, which led to higher yields, higher quality products, and ultimately better sales. Beneficiaries reported savings from spending less on food purchases and new non-agricultural income streams.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Econometric analysis and qualitative data suggest that FtF activity beneficiary households have seen improvements to their household income during the FtF activity lifetime.</li> <li>Being better off at baseline, having fewer younger children, and having a smaller family size are important factors associated with the likelihood a household moved above the Honduran poverty line during the FtF activity lifetime.</li> <li>The FtF activity focus on assisting new business development and value-added processing activities also contributed to improved household economic wellbeing. These contributions appear less impactful than the agricultural production component of the FtF activities, although implementation also focused less on these interventions.</li> <li>Given the FtF activity objectives to increase household per capita income by 32, 50, or 114 percent, depending on the baseline income category they were in (\$1.81 - \$2.42, \$1.25 - \$1.81, or &lt; \$1.25, respectively), analysis suggests the activity focus and intensity was sufficient to achieve these goals within the five-year time frame of the activity.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Theme 2:<br/>Contribution to asset growth, wealth formation</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exposure to the program had statistically significant correlations with increases in working capital and investments made in the home for both activities. This may indicate that households prefer to use income gains for basic needs in the shorter term. Additionally, for ACS-USAID, households were found to be more likely to invest on farm as well.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Econometric analysis suggests that the activities have been successful in increasing working capital for households and households were more likely to use the capital gain for basic needs at home in the shorter term (for both activities). Households are likely to invest on farm as these basic needs are met, which was the case for ACS-USAID.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Learning Theme                                                                            | Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Conclusions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
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| <b>and economic development</b>                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative data corroborates this finding, showing that beneficiaries primarily used additional income to cover household expenses, while leftover income was invested in businesses, farms, and homes.</li> <li>One third of each sample also reported an increased ability to save.</li> <li>Respondents highlighted economic constraints, especially the high cost of inputs and materials, as a major barrier to realizing intended outcomes.</li> <li>Producers, especially those in the ACS-USAID sample, reported various challenges or barriers to entry, including meeting the volume demands and quality standards of market partners, and complying with regulatory or formalization processes. This resulted in some beneficiaries continuing to sell to intermediaries despite lower potential profits. Respondents also commonly noted transportation challenges.</li> </ul>                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative results provide support for income gains for beneficiary households as a result of the FtF activities. Respondents indicate this income is primarily used to meet household expenses and mitigate economic shocks.</li> <li>The data available does not enable analysis of whether the observed improvements in economic well-being are through gains in working capital.</li> <li>The evaluation does not find evidence that households use additional income gained explicitly to manage climatic shocks.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Theme 3: Gender</b>                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Econometric analysis suggests that as program exposure increased, women in participating households were less likely to participate in joint decision-making on agricultural production. The direction of change for joint decision-making on livestock production is positive for ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID.</li> <li>Whether the direct client in the household is female has no effect on either the poverty status or per capita daily income of the household for ACCESS to Markets, while households with male clients did better on these two outcomes for ACS-USAID.</li> <li>The qualitative evidence indicates that women's involvement in productive activities, asset ownership, and community leadership increased. Few women reported increases in their personal time.</li> <li>Respondents noted the following as key barriers to women's empowerment: machismo, women's lack of agricultural/production knowledge, and women's household responsibilities.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite weak econometric evidence, the qualitative evidence suggests that the FtF interventions have made substantial gains in improving women's empowerment in agriculture. Women's involvement in decision-making for agricultural production and financial decisions has shown the strongest improvement, while the qualitative evidence for changes to women's sole or joint ownership of assets is less strong.</li> <li>Gendered social norms and women's lack of income they control contribute to persisting barriers on women's ownership of assets.</li> <li>There are few substantive differences in patterns of results for ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets.</li> <li>The data available do not enable analysis of the impacts of the FtF gender strategies on patterns of household poverty status. However, the econometric analysis finds no evidence of a difference in poverty or income results depending on whether the direct client in the household was male or female for ACCESS to Markets. This is in line with the activities' "whole household" approach to engagement, both on gender issues and all activities related to household health, nutrition and welfare. For ACS-USAID, households with male clients were better off.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Theme 4: Effectiveness in the integration of agricultural and nutrition components</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative data indicates that respondents perceived improvements in household nutrition as a result of the FtF activities, including improvements in child nutrition. For both of the FtF activities, male respondents reported improvements in household nutrition more than female respondents.</li> <li>Respondents noted persistent challenges to obtaining more diverse and nutritious diets, including a lack of water, lack of financial resources to buy food, and a continued preference by households to sell rather than consume their produce.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The data available do not enable econometric analysis on whether nutrition results differ for families that received the agricultural component relative to those that received both the agricultural and the nutritional component.</li> <li>Qualitative results suggest households perceive improvements to household and child nutrition as a result of the FtF activities, primarily through crop diversification, consuming more produce, and meal preparation trainings for mothers. However, improved</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Learning Theme                                           | Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Conclusions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>While improvements in household nutrition were perceived beyond those households that received the integrated nutrition and health component, there is some indication that differences in nutrition outcomes could have resulted from value added by the FtF nutrition component activities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>nutrition was also reported by a large proportion of FGDs held with beneficiaries who only received the agricultural component.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anecdotal qualitative evidence for this appears to be positive, but a more rigorous quantitative analysis of nutrition outcomes is needed.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Theme 5: Effectiveness of the irrigation strategy</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Households in the ACS-USAID sample who participated in an irrigation system were more likely to use drip irrigation, but households that used drip irrigation were not more likely to be above the poverty line or have higher per capita income in either activity.</li> <li>There is qualitative evidence that improved access to drip irrigation was a key factor in increasing agricultural production and income for some beneficiaries.</li> <li>Water management challenges, especially inadequate water supply, were widely reported. Beneficiaries also highlighted challenges with scheduling water use among system members and maintaining system infrastructure.</li> <li>Irrigation system sustainability over the longer term is a concern across both of the FtF activity areas.</li> <li>There is little evidence that beneficiaries perceive knock-on effects of improved irrigation access on household health and nutrition.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Econometric analysis based on available data does not provide evidence that household use of drip irrigation is associated with increased household income. This could be due to the short length of time between the installation of the irrigation systems in 2017, and the outcome observation period (2016-2018).</li> <li>Qualitative results strongly suggest that improved access to drip irrigation by beneficiaries is seen as a highly influential factor enabling improved agricultural production, higher product quality, and increased incomes.</li> <li>There is weaker evidence for improved water management through the FtF activity support, and inadequate water supply remains a strong limiting factor, together with difficulties maintaining irrigation system infrastructure and scheduling water use among members.</li> <li>Sustainability of irrigation systems over the longer term is a strong concern, due to maintenance and other costs and insufficient membership fees and numbers to cover costs.</li> <li>Data available for this evaluation do not enable analysis on whether participation in a payments for ecosystem services program affects the sustainability of the irrigation system.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Theme 6: Resilience and sustainability</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In qualitative focus groups, beneficiaries reported that FtF activities have made them more prepared to deal with economic shocks, of which health care costs were the most significant. ACS-USAID beneficiaries reported that training on savings was the intervention that most prepared them, while ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries highlighted their additional income. Despite increased feelings of preparedness, beneficiaries reported they still primarily took loans for unexpected expenses.</li> <li>Beneficiaries reported that FtF interventions related to irrigation had most helped prepare them to mitigate climatic shocks, of which drought was the most significant. However, some beneficiaries reported resorting to coping mechanisms such as seeking temporary work, selling assets, taking out loans, migrating, or stockpiling food and money to prepare for summer crop losses. Others felt that had no way to cope other than wait for the next planting season. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, technical assistance in the areas of phytopathology and reforestation were also mentioned as contributing to improved resilience to climate shocks.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The evaluation finds suggestive evidence that the FtF investments have contributed to increased capacity of household beneficiaries to mitigate economic shocks, but there is less evidence of this for climatic shocks.</li> <li>Beneficiaries have seen gains to their household income and improvements in poverty status during the FtF activity lifetime, and they perceive greater capacity to deal with unexpected expenses and other economic shocks.</li> <li>Beneficiaries identify healthcare costs as the most significant economic shock they face. FtF activity trainings on savings (ACS-USAID) and increased income through FtF support (ACCESS) are seen as most helpful for increasing capacity to respond, and by extension overall resiliency.</li> <li>Beneficiaries identify drought as the most significant climate shock they face, and report that FtF activity support to improve irrigation systems (ACS-USAID and ACCESS) has been most helpful for increasing capacity to respond, but water management issues are also commonly noted.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                |

| Learning Theme                 | Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Conclusions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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|                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Despite this, evidence for increased capacity to respond to droughts and other climatic shocks is less strong. Beneficiaries commonly resort to coping mechanisms such as seeking temporary work, selling assets, taking out loans, migrating, stockpiling food and money, or have no coping mechanism.</li> <li>In terms of overall contributions of FtF activities to ensuring sustainability, beneficiary knowledge and capacity to continue implementing activities without FtF support is a concern for many stakeholders, while beneficiary demand for such services beyond the activity lifetime is perceived to be high.</li> <li>Few beneficiaries and stakeholders believe that service providers such as extension officers and health centers have capacity to continue service provision without FtF activity support and financial sustainability is perceived to be low.</li> </ul>       |
| <b>Add-On Issue: Migration</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migration was widely noted in both FtF areas. Entire families migrate seasonally for coffee-harvesting, dramatically reducing village populations during those periods. Young men and women were noted as the most common demographic to migrate out of communities for longer periods of time, seeking economic opportunities and employment.</li> <li>Migration has had both positive and negative effects on communities. Migration was said to have caused family disintegration due to the separation of family members and reduced the size of the local agricultural workforce. Longer-term migration to places like Spain or the United States was seen as helping to improve some local economies through remittances sent to extended family members, but the reach of these positive impacts was seen as more limited.</li> <li>Temporary or seasonal migration around the coffee harvest was seen to have negative effects on achieving nutrition/health objectives for both activities. ACCESS to Markets respondents also noted direct negative effects on agricultural production objectives due to labor shortages.</li> <li>Some beneficiaries reported that by improving business, entrepreneurship, or micro-enterprise opportunities and the economic situation within communities, FtF activities had contributed to some people who would have migrated instead choosing to stay in their communities. Evidence of this is stronger in ACCESS to Markets areas than in ACS-USAID areas.</li> <li>FtF stakeholders in each zone suggest differing approaches to reducing migration. To further reduce migration, ACS-USAID stakeholders suggested increasing production and supporting additional diversification of livelihood opportunities and microenterprises. In ACCESS to Markets areas, stakeholders suggested involving young people more directly in</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out-migration, both seasonal and permanent, was widely noted to leave smaller populations in communities in both of the FtF activity areas.</li> <li>The perceived effects of migration on communities are mostly negative, with family disintegration and loss of the local agricultural workforce highlighted as the top two concerns.</li> <li>The main reason that people migrate was overwhelmingly cited as lack of economic opportunities in their home communities.</li> <li>By improving economic conditions of households, FtF activities may have dissuaded some people in communities from migrating.</li> <li>Beneficiaries and stakeholder recommendations for activities that could be promoted to more effectively reduce migration include adding an explicit focus on youth and providing additional support to diversify and expand economic opportunities in communities.</li> </ul> |

| Learning Theme | Key Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Conclusions |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
|                | <p>trainings, especially the children of beneficiaries, so they also have improved knowledge and a stronger skills base on which to draw.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was little indication that beneficiaries in either area had permanently migrated out during the project lifetime at scale.</li> </ul> |             |

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Sustained improvements in household poverty status may require additional support and longer time frames beyond the 5-year lifetime of the FtF activities, however maintaining a focus on improved agricultural production, quality and lowering barriers to market engagement appears to be appropriate for achieving FtF poverty reduction objectives.** The sum of evidence suggests beneficiary households achieved improvements in poverty status during 2015-2018: during this period, additional years of exposure to the FtF activity was associated with a higher likelihood of households moving above the poverty line or into a higher income category. The analysis also shows that each of the FtF activities appear to be meeting their achievement targets with respect to moving households into higher income categories. Support for income improvements through an agricultural production focus appears to be more impactful than small business development and processing activities, but could also relate to a relatively greater activity focus on the agricultural component<sup>4</sup>. Understanding additional reasons for this would require a more targeted effort beyond the data available for this evaluation.

**To obtain greater gains on income and asset accumulation through the FtF activity approach, future planning of FtF activities should consider looking for synergies with other activities that also aim to reduce key market constraints and improve transport infrastructure.** The evaluation found some evidence for changes in asset growth of capital investments, although households tend to use additional income gains primarily to manage economic shocks and cover household expenses. This could be indicative of initial steps out of poverty, and it is possible that additional investments may occur once households are able to meet initial household needs. Results also suggest continued major impediments to market entry and marketing of increased production, including poor transport infrastructure and high costs of inputs required to achieve production increases. For future planning and activity investments, FtF may want to consider prioritizing synergies with other activities that also aim to help reduce these constraints.

**To increase gender balance in gains, FtF should consider gender differentiation in advising on management of income gains for beneficiaries.** The evaluation found improvements in women's economic empowerment but little evidence for change in women's ownerships of assets. Qualitative results suggest that improved quantity and quality of agricultural production were obtained by men and women. Use of additional income appears to be differentially channeled by gender, with men more focused on productive investments and women focused more on household needs.

**To obtain greater effectiveness and household economic gains from irrigation project investments, consider focusing additional efforts on institutional issues, including water use right negotiations, water management committee functioning, and increasing household access to additional water sources.** The evaluation found that beneficiaries had a strongly positive view of impacts of drip irrigation and irrigation system improvements on agricultural yields, quality and income. But, results also point to substantial persisting challenges in the pathway from improved irrigation system access and infrastructure to household economic gains in agriculture. Bottlenecks appear to be primarily around institutional issues. Generation and management of sufficient revenue to fund water system maintenance is a critical enough concern to merit increased FtF attention in future.

**Consider investing in rigorous impact evaluation designs to obtain stronger, more nuanced and more reliable learning on impacts to beneficiaries from FtF activity programming.** The evaluation learning questions put forth by USAID are highly relevant and important, but the data

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<sup>4</sup> Implementers note the activity level of effort spent on small business and processing activities was much lower than that spent on agricultural production, hence it may not be unexpected that the impact from small business and processing activities would be less widespread. Together, both sets of activities were seen to contribute to the overall objective of poverty reduction.

available for the evaluation originated from a household sampling and survey design that activity IPs understandably designed for their own M&E purposes rather than to specifically answer these questions. Ultimately, the data were unable to provide nuanced analysis to rigorously inform on several of the learning questions. For future such efforts, USAID should consider investing in rigorous impact evaluation approaches and third-party independent data collection that makes use of stronger household survey and sampling designs for such types of analyses, including drawing on data from counterfactual populations.

## I INTRODUCTION

This report presents findings, conclusions and recommendations from a performance evaluation of two United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) Feed the Future (FtF) activities in Honduras: ACCESS to Markets and the *Alianza para el Corredor Seco* (ACS-USAID) activity. The evaluation was designed and conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago under the Monitoring and Evaluation Support for Collaborative Learning and Adapting (MESCLA) activity.

### I.1 EVALUATION ACTIVITY BACKGROUND

USAID/Honduras requested MESCLA to design and implement a PE of the two FtF activities in Honduras, which in turn was sub-contracted to NORC. The evaluation addresses six learning themes and sub-questions that were developed by USAID/Honduras, using a combination of statistical analyses of household data collected by the FtF activity implementing partners (IPs) and made available to the evaluation team, and analyses of companion qualitative data collected by the evaluation team. The evaluation includes a quantitative component, focused on analysis of existing household survey datasets to answer targeted learning questions as specified below, and a complementary qualitative component, which draws on qualitative data collected from beneficiaries, implementing partners and other key stakeholders.

### I.2 ACCESS TO MARKETS AND ACS-USAID ACTIVITY BACKGROUND

#### I.2.1 ACCESS TO MARKETS

ACCESS to Markets is a five-year USAID/Feed the Future activity implemented during 2014-2019 in the three contiguous departments of Santa Bárbara, Copán and Ocotepeque in USAID's Northern Zone of Influence (NZOI). ACCESS to Markets is a direct follow-on activity to the USAID-funded ACCESO activity, which utilizes and expands on the farm, household and community-level approaches developed under USAID-ACCESO. ACCESS to Markets is implemented by Fintrac, Inc. and five local partners. According to activity documentation, the ACCESS to Markets activity works in 78 municipalities, 696 villages (*aldeas*), and 1,396 communities (*caseríos*). This includes working with approximately 8,286 client households that were transitioned from the USAID-ACCESO activity in 2015, and an additional 1,528 new client households brought into the activity in 2015<sup>5</sup>. As of September 2018, 6,423 of the household clients from the USAID-ACCESO activity had been transitioned to ACCESS to Markets, and the activity was assisting a total of 28,137 household clients.

ACCESS to Markets was established with two main purposes: To increase inclusive agricultural sector growth and to improve nutrition status, especially for women and children. This is achieved through several activities, including: (1) technical assistance and training in production, postharvest, management, and marketing techniques; (2) improving market access by linking smallholders with input suppliers and buyers; (3) increasing financial literacy and access to rural financial services; (4) eliminating policy constraints that impede market access; (5) improving utilization and consumption of healthy foods, improving living conditions, and reducing health problems; and (6) providing health and nutrition training and services to improve outreach and effectiveness of community health and volunteer services.

The activity has the following high-level goals<sup>6</sup>:

- Increase per capita income;
  - By 114 percent, for households with baseline incomes below \$1.25/person/day
  - By 50 percent, for households with baseline incomes between \$1.25 and \$1.81/person/day
  - By 32 percent, for households with baseline incomes between \$1.81 and \$2.42/person/day

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<sup>5</sup> Fintrac. ACCESS to Markets Annual Report #01, September 2015. USAID, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> Fintrac. ACCESS to Markets Year 3 Annual Workplan, September 2016. USAID, Washington, DC.

- Attain at least 25 percent female participation in increased access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income, or employment);
- Reduce the prevalence of stunted children under five by 20 percent in targeted communities;
- Reduce the prevalence of underweight children under five by 20 percent in targeted communities.

### 1.2.2 ALIANZA PARA EL CORREDOR SECO

The *Alianza para el Corredor Seco* (ACS-USAID) activity is a five-year USAID/Feed the Future activity implemented during 2015-2020 in the three contiguous departments of La Paz, Intibucá, and Lempira in USAID's Southern Zone of Influence (SZOI). The Honduran Strategic Investment Office, INVEST-H (formerly known as the Millennium Challenge Account Honduras MCA-H), is responsible for the management and implementation of ACS. The activity works in 26 municipalities, 361 *aldeas* and 1,288 *caseríos*. As of March 2018, the activity was assisting 21,321 household clients.<sup>7</sup>

ACS-USAID was established with two main purposes that mirror those of the ACCESS to Markets activity. Purpose 1 aims to increase inclusive agricultural sector growth. Purpose 2 aims to improve nutritional status, especially for women and children. ACS-USAID activities include: (1) technical assistance and training in production, postharvest, management, and marketing techniques; (2) improving market access by linking smallholders with input suppliers and buyers; (3) increasing financial literacy and access to rural financial services; (4) establishing agreements with local firms/service providers to provide a range of specific technical assistance services to participating households; (5) improving the utilization and consumption of healthy foods, improving living conditions, and reducing health problems; (6) improving water access through the installation of drip irrigation systems and creation of community water boards; and (7) providing health and nutrition trainings and services to improve the outreach and effectiveness of community health and volunteer services.

The activity has the following high-level goals:<sup>8</sup>

- Help a minimum of 18,000 households to increase their income; and
- Reduce undernutrition by 20 percent in the ACS-USAID Zone of Influence.

### 1.3 DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS AND THEORY OF CHANGE

ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID goals coincide with Development Objective 2 of the Mission's Country Development Cooperation Strategy: Extreme Poverty Sustainably Reduced for Vulnerable Populations in Western Honduras. The activities support the following intermediate results (IRs):

#### **IR 2.1: Resilience of livelihoods increased**

Sub-IR 2.1.1 Natural resource management and biodiversity protection improved

Sub-IR 2.1.2 Adaptation of poor households to climate risks increased

#### **IR 2.2: Incomes increased**

Sub-IR 2.2.1 Agricultural productivity improved

Sub-IR 2.2.2 Market demand and access increased

#### **IR 2.3: Human capital improved, with a focus on children**

Sub-IR 2.3.1 Basic education and nutrition service delivery improved

Sub-IR 2.3.2 Local service management systems improved

USAID expects these results will be achieved through increased and inclusive growth in the agricultural sector and through improvements to nutritional status of the population, which will in turn be obtained through specific project interventions designed to achieve the following outputs<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> INVEST-H. ACS-USAID Quarterly Report, March 2018. USAID, Washington, DC.

<sup>8</sup> INVEST-H. ACS-USAID 2018 Annual Workplan and Budget. USAID, Washington, DC.

<sup>9</sup> Outputs are consistent across the results frameworks for both activities.

|                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ACCESS to Markets<sup>10</sup></b> | <i>Output 1.1 – Agricultural productivity improved</i><br><i>Output 1.2 – Market demand and access increased</i><br><i>Output 1.3 – Increased investment in agriculture and employment opportunities</i><br><i>Output 1.4 – Access to financial services improved</i>                         | <i>Output 2.1 – Improved access to diverse and quality food and nutrition-related behaviors</i><br><i>Output 2.2 – Improved community and household sanitation and hygiene</i><br><i>Output 2.3 – Improved utilization of maternal and child health and nutrition services</i> |
| <b>ACS-USAID<sup>11</sup></b>         | <i>Output 1.1 – Improved agricultural productivity</i><br><i>Output 1.2 – Improved access to markets</i><br><i>Output 1.3 – Increased investment in agriculture and employment opportunities</i><br><i>Output 1.4 – Improved access to sound and affordable financial and risk management</i> | <i>Output 2.1 – Improved access to diverse, quality food and nutrition-related behaviors</i><br><i>Output 2.2 – Improved sanitation and hygiene</i><br><i>Output 2.3 – Improved utilization of maternal and child health and nutrition services</i>                            |

## 2 EVALUATION PURPOSE, AUDIENCE, AND INTENDED USES

USAID/Honduras commissioned this evaluation to address a set of six broad learning themes and questions put forth by USAID/Honduras. The purpose of this performance evaluation of the FtF activities is to provide evidence on and better understand household economic status and poverty trajectories, FtF programming effectiveness and impacts, and reasons why. The evaluation findings are expected to have accountability and learning value to USAID and implementing partners. Key secondary audiences for the evaluation results include the Government of Honduras, other donors, practitioners and related stakeholders active in agriculture, nutrition, health and related sectors. The intended uses of this evaluation are to inform the design and implementation of future activities that aim to use integrated agricultural production and investment, health and nutrition synergies to improve poverty alleviation and malnutrition.

## 3 EVALUATION LEARNING QUESTIONS

The evaluation team was tasked with undertaking analyses to answer fifteen evaluation questions proposed by USAID/Honduras across six learning themes. Full details of the quantitative and overall evaluation approach for this PE are available in previous deliverables submitted for this evaluation.<sup>12</sup>

### **Evaluation Learning Themes and Questions<sup>13</sup>**

#### **Theme 1: Paths and timelines for leaving poverty**

1. What factors are associated with households that move above and stay above the poverty line of \$2.42 per person per day? What differentiates successful households from the rest? In addition, what factors are associated with households within each of the three starting income categories below the poverty line that were defined by the project (< \$1.25, \$1.25-\$1.81, and \$1.81-\$2.42 per person per day)?
2. What are the paths and timelines for families to leave poverty, and to move across the three starting income categories defined by the project? What are the patterns (including gender dynamics) for families that do not leave poverty or move out of their starting income category?
3. Is it possible that the focus and intensity of the effort can meet project objectives for increasing income and reducing malnutrition? If not, why not? If yes, what assumptions must be met?

<sup>10</sup> Fintrac. ACCESS to Markets Year 3 Annual Workplan, September 2016. USAID, Washington, DC.

<sup>11</sup> INVEST-H. ACS-USAID 2018 Annual Workplan and Budget. USAID, Washington, DC.

<sup>12</sup> See: NORC. 2019. *Performance Evaluation of Feed the Future Activities in Honduras: Evaluation Protocol*, March 2019, USAID, and Washington, DC.

<sup>13</sup> This list of learning themes and questions reflect updates agreed to by USAID, MESCLA and NORC as of 6/12/2019. The changes to questions in the evaluation team's SOW reflect limitations to answering some of the learning questions with the household survey data made available to NORC, and revised USAID learning interests.

**Theme 2: Contribution to asset growth, wealth formation and economic development**

4. Has the FtF intervention influenced asset growth and working capital increase? If so, has it been used for long-term wealth formation, invested in working capital to expand production or has it been used to generate income to cover household costs or to confront climate shocks?
5. To what extent does spending or investment decisions around production affect the poverty level of households?

**Theme 3: Gender**

6. To what extent have FtF interventions impacted women's empowerment<sup>14</sup> in agriculture?
7. Have the gender strategy and actions of FtF had an impact on patterns of poverty?
8. Is there an observable difference between the results achieved through the different ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets implementation of the gender strategies?

**Theme 4: Effectiveness in the integration of agricultural and nutrition components**

9. Is there a difference in the nutrition results among families that received only the agricultural component and those that received both the agricultural and nutritional component?
10. If so, are these differences the result of value added by the nutritional component?

**Theme 5: Effectiveness of the irrigation strategy**

11. Does irrigation committees' participation in compensation for ecosystem services influence the sustainability of the irrigation system?
12. Has additional investment in irrigation projects had an impact on the use and management of water in the zone of influence? If yes, what was that impact?
13. Does access to drip irrigation affect the income level of a household? If so, has this change (in household income) had an impact on health and resiliency?

**Theme 6: Resilience and sustainability**

14. Have FtF investments in Honduras increased the capacity of poor household beneficiaries (below \$2.42/person/day) to mitigate economic and climatic shocks? What types of interventions are the most and least helpful?
15. How has FtF contributed to ensuring sustainability (and increasing resiliency)<sup>15</sup>?

## 4 EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The PE of the two FtF activities includes quantitative and qualitative components that together aim to answer the targeted learning questions proposed by USAID. The quantitative component of the PE is comprised of analysis of household survey data of activity beneficiaries during 2015-2017 that was designed and collected by the ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID activity implementers, and provided to the evaluation team for analysis. The qualitative component of the PE is designed and led by the evaluation team, and draws on qualitative data collected in 2019 from beneficiaries and indirect beneficiaries within client households, implementing partners and other key stakeholders. The qualitative data collection took place after obtaining preliminary quantitative results, and was designed to help interpret quantitative results, better understand how and why individuals and households have undertaken behavior change related to the USAID-supported activities, and expand on the quantitative results obtained through the analysis of the ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID household survey datasets.

### 4.1 OVERVIEW OF QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The main source of qualitative data for the evaluation was collected from activity beneficiaries, through focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs). Additional KIIs were conducted with other activity stakeholders, including implementing partner activity staff and USAID.

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<sup>14</sup> Following IP documentation on gender strategy and indicators, women's empowerment is conceptualized in terms of increased access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment). The evaluation also examines changes to women's roles in agricultural and household decision-making.

<sup>15</sup> This refers to institutional, community, and household levels. Sustainability may include capacity to respond to shocks.

The qualitative component of this evaluation is structured to complement and expand on the quantitative results. It focuses on, among others, understanding project implementation processes and targeting effectiveness, and exploring the reasons that help explain adoption of practices promoted by the FtF activities and their contribution to observed impacts on economic development, women's empowerment, pathways out of poverty and household resilience. The qualitative data collection also aims to identify and enhance the understanding of challenges and reasons for non-adoption or low uptake of practices, and context or other barriers that may affect activity participation and realization of nutrition and poverty reduction objectives by households.

FGDs and KIs were stratified across the six departments of activity implementation (La Paz, Intibucá, Lempira, Santa Bárbara, Copán, Ocotepeque), by three broad activity sub-components (agricultural production, agricultural production and health/nutrition, processing/value-added), gender, and key stakeholder groups. All qualitative data collection tools were tested in the field prior to use.

## 4.2 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Focus group discussion protocols were designed to inform on specific learning questions, examine program effects on direct beneficiary households, and provide depth of understanding around reasons for program effectiveness and potential variation across different sub-groups of interest. Given the evaluation's focus on agricultural production, nutrition and health, and cross-cutting themes on gender, poverty and resilience, FGDs were stratified across beneficiaries who participated in three different broad categories of intervention activities: (1) Agricultural production; (2) Agricultural production and nutrition/health activities; and (3) Processing and value-added activities.

Gender-segregated discussions were conducted for each of the three categories of activity participation, resulting in six different FGD categories:

1. Women from households that received both agricultural production and nutrition/health intervention activities;
2. Men from households that received both agricultural production and nutrition/health intervention activities;
3. Women from households that received only the agricultural production intervention;
4. Men from households that received only the agricultural production intervention;
5. Women from households that received processing/value-added intervention activities;
6. Men from households that received processing/value-added intervention activities.

The evaluation team conducted two FGDs in each of four villages selected per department, resulting in eight FGDs per department and a total of 48 FGDs across the six departments (Table I). This distribution of FGDs ensured coverage within each department across: each of the six distinct beneficiary groups, data from men and women in each village, and data points from agricultural producers and processors in each village sampled. It also takes into account that the number of households who received both agricultural production and nutrition/health activities in the quantitative sample for this evaluation is generally low for both projects, relative to the overall household sample, which meant there were fewer such households available for qualitative data collection in this beneficiary category.

FGDs were organized with the assistance of project liaisons for each sampled village. The evaluation team aimed to convene respondents from client households who directly participated in the USAID-supported activities themselves (direct beneficiaries) or other members of client households (indirect beneficiaries), span a range of ages and household wealth status, and represent typical cases rather than extremes. All FGDs were conducted in Spanish, recorded, and translated and transcribed to English for analysis.

Table 1: Target FGD Distribution across *Aldeas* in Each Department

|       | <i>Aldea 1</i>                             | <i>Aldea 2</i>                | <i>Aldea 3</i>                               | <i>Aldea 4</i>                 |
|-------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| FGD 1 | Men, agricultural production and nutrition | Men, agricultural production  | Women, agricultural production and nutrition | Women, agricultural production |
| FGD 2 | Women, processors/value-added              | Women, processors/value-added | Men, processors/value-added                  | Men, processors/value-added    |

### 4.3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

KIIs consisted of semi-structured questions administered to program beneficiaries, ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets activity staff and local partners or other stakeholders, and USAID representatives. The evaluation team aimed to conduct a total of 48 KIIs with village-level beneficiaries and other local stakeholders, 18 KIIs with ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID activity staff and partners in the project departments, and three KIIs conducted with USAID staff in Tegucigalpa.

Table 2: Qualitative Sample Design: FGDs and KIIs

|                                                                                     | ACS-USAID |          |         | ACCESS to Markets |       |            | Total |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------|-------------------|-------|------------|-------|
|                                                                                     | La Paz    | Intibucá | Lempira | Santa Bárbara     | Copán | Ocotepeque |       |
| Focus Group Discussions (48)                                                        |           |          |         |                   |       |            |       |
| Agricultural production HH (Men)                                                    | 1         | 1        | 1       | 1                 | 1     | 1          | 6     |
| Agricultural production HH (Women)                                                  | 1         | 1        | 1       | 1                 | 1     | 1          | 6     |
| Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Men)                                          | 1         | 1        | 1       | 1                 | 1     | 1          | 6     |
| Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Women)                                        | 1         | 1        | 1       | 1                 | 1     | 1          | 6     |
| Processors/value-added HH (Men)                                                     | 2         | 2        | 2       | 2                 | 2     | 2          | 12    |
| Processors/value-added HH (Women)                                                   | 2         | 2        | 2       | 2                 | 2     | 2          | 12    |
| Key Informant Interviews (69)                                                       |           |          |         |                   |       |            |       |
| Village-level KIIs with beneficiaries                                               | 5         | 5        | 5       | 5                 | 5     | 5          | 30    |
| Government and/or other nutrition and health stakeholders <sup>16</sup>             | 3         | 3        | 3       | 3                 | 3     | 3          | 18    |
| Agriculture / value chain partners (financial institutions, buyers, other partners) | 2         | 2        | 2       | 2                 | 2     | 2          | 12    |
| ACCESS to Markets / ACS Activity staff                                              | 1         | 1        | 1       | 1                 | 1     | 1          | 6     |
| USAID staff                                                                         | n/a       | n/a      | n/a     | n/a               | n/a   | n/a        | 3     |

### 4.4 SITE SELECTION FOR QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION

A purposive selection process was used to select 24 implementation villages (*aldeas*) as sites for qualitative data collection for the PE. Site selection was stratified by the six departments where the FtF activities are implemented, resulting in four *aldeas* selected per department. The evaluation team aimed for broad representation across a range of *aldea* and context characteristics present in the implementation zones. The selection process also drew on preliminary *aldea*-level economic results from the household survey datasets made available to NORC.

<sup>16</sup> For example: Municipality representatives, local government health, agricultural and/or education counterparts.

The selection process aimed to generate a list of *aldeas* for qualitative data collection that varied in exposure to broad types of project activities, and on preliminary econometric results.<sup>17</sup> For the ACCESS to Markets activity, four *aldeas* were selected from each department (Copán, Ocotepeque, and Santa Bárbara) for a total of 12 *aldeas*.<sup>18</sup> For the ACS activity, four *aldeas* were selected from each of Intibucá, La Paz, and Lempira departments for a total of 12 *aldeas*.

Of the four *aldeas* selected per department, the evaluation team aimed for at least two *aldeas* to have project beneficiary households that received both the agriculture and nutrition components; and at least one *aldea* that had households who participated in an irrigation system, according to the household survey data collected by IPs and provided to NORC. *Aldeas* represented in the household survey data were drawn randomly within department and treatment component, then refined to ensure that for each program the sample included a mix of *aldeas* that improved on income and those that did not. Village selection was drawn from *aldeas* with at least five households in the quantitative household sample. The initial list of selected *aldeas* was shared with USAID and IPs, and some replacements were made based on IP suggestions or updated information. In the final sample, the 24 selected *aldeas* varied in terms of their location (four from each department), the overall activity implemented (ACCESS to Markets or ACS-USAID), household participation in different activity components (agriculture only or both agriculture and nutrition; and irrigation system participation), and whether surveyed households in the *aldea* experienced an overall income change from baseline.



*Focus group discussions*

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<sup>17</sup> The Evaluation Protocol initially proposed to include malnutrition results as well, but this was not possible in practice because the malnutrition data provided to the Evaluation Team cannot be linked to individual households.

<sup>18</sup> For the purpose of qualitative data collection sampling, the evaluation team did not consider the few *aldeas* in Lempira where the ACCESS to Market project had beneficiaries.

## 4.5 SUMMARY OF ACS-USAID AND ACCESS TO MARKETS QUALITATIVE SAMPLES

Table 3 summarizes the overall qualitative sample from ACS-USAID implementing areas. In total, 24 FGDs were held and 38 village- or department-level KIs were conducted across the three ACS-USAID departments. Table 4 summarizes the overall qualitative sample from ACCESS to Markets implementing areas. In total, 23 FGDs were held and 37 village- or department-level KIs were conducted across the three ACCESS to Markets departments.

Table 3: Summary of ACS-USAID Qualitative Sample

|                                                                         | ACS-USAID Departments |           |           |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                                                         | Intibucá              | La Paz    | Lempira   | Total     |
| <b>Focus Group Discussions (24)</b>                                     |                       |           |           |           |
| Agricultural production HH (Men)                                        | 3                     | 1         | 3         | 7         |
| Agricultural production HH (Women)                                      | 0                     | 1         | 0         | 1         |
| Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Men)                              | 1                     | 1         | 1         | 3         |
| Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Women)                            | 1                     | 1         | 2         | 4         |
| Processors/value-added HH (Men)                                         | 0                     | 2         | 0         | 2         |
| Processors/value-added HH (Women)                                       | 3                     | 2         | 2         | 7         |
| <b>TOTAL FGDs BY DEPARTMENT:</b>                                        | <b>8</b>              | <b>8</b>  | <b>8</b>  | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Village-Level Key Informant Interviews (27)</b>                      |                       |           |           |           |
| Beneficiaries                                                           | 5                     | 5         | 6         | 16        |
| Government and/or other nutrition and health stakeholders <sup>19</sup> | 3                     | 5         | 3         | 11        |
| <b>Department-Level Key Informant Interviews (11)</b>                   |                       |           |           |           |
| ACS staff                                                               | 2                     | 1         | 2         | 5         |
| Financial services                                                      | 1                     | 1         | 1         | 3         |
| Other agricultural/value chain partners                                 | 1                     | 1         | 1         | 3         |
| <b>TOTAL KIs BY DEPARTMENT:</b>                                         | <b>12</b>             | <b>13</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>38</b> |

Table 4: Summary of ACCESS to Markets Qualitative Sample

|                                                    | ACCESS to Markets Departments |            |               |           |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|---------------|-----------|
|                                                    | Copán                         | Ocatepeque | Santa Bárbara | Total     |
| <b>Focus Group Discussions (23)</b>                |                               |            |               |           |
| Agricultural production HH (Men)                   | 1                             | 2          | 3             | 6         |
| Agricultural production HH (Women)                 | 1                             | 0          | 2             | 3         |
| Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Men)         | 1                             | 1          | 0             | 2         |
| Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Women)       | 1                             | 1          | 1             | 3         |
| Processors/value-added HH (Men)                    | 2                             | 1          | 0             | 3         |
| Processors/value-added HH (Women)                  | 2                             | 3          | 1             | 6         |
| <b>TOTAL FGDs BY DEPARTMENT:</b>                   | <b>8</b>                      | <b>8</b>   | <b>7</b>      | <b>23</b> |
| <b>Village-Level Key Informant Interviews (29)</b> |                               |            |               |           |

<sup>19</sup> For example: Municipality representatives, local government health, agricultural and/or education counterparts.

|                                                                         |           |           |           |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Beneficiaries                                                           | 5         | 7         | 5         | 17        |
| Government and/or other nutrition and health stakeholders <sup>20</sup> | 4         | 3         | 2         | 9         |
| Financial services                                                      | 0         | 0         | 1         | 1         |
| Other agricultural / value chain partners                               | 0         | 0         | 2         | 2         |
| <b>Department-Level Key Informant Interviews (8)</b>                    |           |           |           |           |
| ACCESS to Markets staff                                                 | 1         | 1         | 1         | 3         |
| Financial services                                                      | 0         | 1         | 1         | 2         |
| Other agricultural/value chain partners                                 | 1         | 1         | 1         | 3         |
| <b>TOTAL KIIs BY DEPARTMENT:</b>                                        | <b>11</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>35</b> |

## 4.6 QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The evaluation team analyzed transcribed data from the group discussions and KIIs using content analysis techniques, in which text was coded according to key themes of interest across the interviewees and discussion participants. The team summarized responses related to each theme and included quotations from respondents to illustrate key findings. This included highlighting “outlier” responses and experiences, such that the range of responses is captured in the summary write-up.

The team conducted qualitative data analysis on FGD and village-level KII transcripts using Dedoose. Qualitative data was analyzed within strata and types (e.g., female agricultural producers) and then across strata and types (e.g., female agricultural producers vs. female agricultural producers who also received the nutrition/health intervention) to develop a thorough understanding of responses, identify contradictory findings, and highlight common themes and narratives. The evaluation team coded all interview notes and transcripts with a two-pronged approach using Dedoose. Open coding captured themes and broader trends as they emerged during an initial review of the data and was grounded in the text of the coded documents (as opposed to being set *ex ante*). Follow-up coding was then used to compare and assess themes between codes, using a hierarchical approach wherein codes were grouped and sub-grouped by learning question or topic area.

## 4.7 SUMMARY OF ACS-USAID AND ACCESS TO MARKETS QUANTITATIVE SAMPLES

The household survey datasets used for this evaluation consist of three rounds of baseline data, collected in 2015, 2016 and 2017, and three rounds of results collected in 2016, 2017, and 2018. The baseline datasets include households that initially registered as household clients, as well as individuals registered under USAID-ACCESO and considered as potential clients for ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID. For any given household in a cohort, baseline data was collected prior to the start of assistance from ACS-USAID or ACCESS to Markets. As the project progressed, some individuals dropped out or discontinued their participation and some USAID-ACCESO participants declined to continue under the new programs. This led to drop-outs and potential beneficiaries also being included in the quantitative sample. This is reflected in the first three columns of [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#), indicating the household sample size at baseline and for subsequent reporting periods for each of the three cohorts in each of the programs.

For the purpose of the quantitative analysis for the evaluation, the evaluation team excluded all households that were either not taken on as clients after the baseline, which happened only for the 2015 cohort, as well as households that do not have observations in 2016, 2017, or 2018. In other words, for the 2015 and 2016 cohorts, only households that have observations in all four data collection periods—baseline, 2016 results, 2017 results, and 2018 results—are included in the analysis. For the 2017 cohort, only households that have both

<sup>20</sup> For example: Municipality representatives, local government health, agricultural and/or education counterparts.

baseline and the 2017 and 2018 observations are included.<sup>21</sup> In addition, households with missing data on any of the outcome variables are also excluded from the analysis.<sup>22</sup> As such, the resulting analysis samples are smaller than that in the final round of data collection (2018 results). The analysis samples for ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID are shown in the last columns of [Table 5](#) and [Table 6](#), respectively.

**Table 5: ACCESS to Markets Quantitative Household Sample**

|             | Baseline | 2016 Results | 2017 Results | 2018 Results | Analysis |
|-------------|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| 2015 Cohort | 866      | 546          | 529          | 537          | 474      |
| 2016 Cohort | 376      | 346          | 315          | 302          | 288      |
| 2017 Cohort | 357      | -            | 347          | 318          | 317      |
| Total       | 1,599    | 892          | 1,191        | 1,157        | 1,079    |

**Table 6: ACS-USAID Quantitative Household Sample**

|             | Baseline | 2016 Results | 2017 Results | 2018 Results | Analysis |
|-------------|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------|
| 2015 Cohort | 709      | 629          | 451          | 424          | 414      |
| 2016 Cohort | 337      | 328          | 274          | 251          | 250      |
| 2017 Cohort | 481      | -            | 408          | 379          | 373      |
| Total       | 1,527    | 957          | 1,133        | 1,054        | 1,037    |

## 4.8 QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS METHODS

A key purpose of the econometric analysis for this evaluation is to examine whether changes in outcome variables of interest for households participating in the ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID programs have occurred over time, as well as to determine the extent to which changes have occurred. Because households of different poverty status (above or below poverty line) differed on a number of characteristics at baseline ([Table 23](#) and [Table 24](#)), we conduct multivariate regression analyses to examine changes in outcome variables over time while controlling for the background characteristics at baseline. The multivariate regression analyses also allow us to account for variations that may exist across different geographic departments.

Because there are no observations for non-participants in the activities, our analyses cannot compare outcomes between participants and non-participants to examine impacts of the ACCESS to Markets and the ACS-USAID activities. However, because the three different cohorts began participation in different years, they experienced different levels of program exposure. Approximate exposure for the different cohorts in each data collection period is shown in

[Table 7](#). We take advantage of this variation in exposure by appending data from the 2016 results round (for 2015 and 2016 cohorts) and the 2017 and 2018 results rounds (for the 2015, 2016 and 2017 cohorts) to examine correlations between outcome variables and program participation. In general, we expect to observe larger changes for households that were exposed to the programs longer. To account for differences in household characteristics at baseline, we first merged the baseline data with the appended results data for each household using their CIRIS ID.

<sup>21</sup> For a few households, we could not link their observations across different data collection rounds because of missing household ID (CIRIS ID), which also resulted in their exclusion from the analysis sample.

<sup>22</sup> This is because we cannot examine changes in an outcome variable for households that have missing information on that outcome.

Table 7: Approximate Exposure to the Programs at Different Data Collection Rounds, by Cohort

|             | Baseline | 2016 Results | 2017 Results | 2018 Results |
|-------------|----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| 2015 Cohort | 0        | 1-2 years    | 2-3 years    | 3-4 years    |
| 2016 Cohort | 0        | 0-1 year     | 1-2 years    | 2-3 years    |
| 2017 Cohort | 0        | -            | 0-1 year     | 1-2 years    |

We use the following multivariate regression model to examine changes in outcome variables of interest:

$$Y_{hctr} = \alpha + \beta X_{hcr,t(b)} + \gamma E_{hct} + C_c + R_r + \varepsilon_{hctr} \quad (1)$$

where  $Y_{hctr}$  is the outcome of interest for household  $h$  in cohort  $c$  in year  $t$  and in department  $r$ ;  $X_{hcr,t(b)}$  is a vector of baseline household characteristics included (see Annex I, Table 23 and Table 24, noting some of these are time invariant);  $E_{hct}$  is the exposure to the ACCESS to Markets or the ACS-USAID activity as defined in

Table 7, which varies by year and by cohort for each household;  $C_c$  and  $R_r$  are cohort and department fixed effects; and  $\varepsilon_{hctr}$  is the random error term. We adjust for clustering of standard errors at the household level as each household contributes more than one observation. The coefficient  $\gamma$  represents the effect of length of exposure to the programs on the outcome  $Y$ , controlling for household characteristics.

Finally, we use a logistic regression model for dichotomous outcomes, such as whether the household is above or below the poverty line, and an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model for continuous outcomes, such as per capita daily income.

## 4.9 EVALUATION DESIGN LIMITATIONS

Limitations and sources of bias for this pre-post evaluation design include:

- **Lack of a valid counterfactual:** The pre/post quantitative design for this evaluation, without a valid counterfactual, means that the results of the statistical analyses cannot definitively attribute any changes observed directly to the FtF activities. However, this limitation is somewhat mitigated by the collection of substantial complementary qualitative data, and the availability of multiple rounds of survey data. Companion qualitative data collection help to corroborate the statistical results; capture information on potential confounders; and understand beneficiary perceptions on if and how project activities helped to elicit change in key outcomes.
- **Survey data quality:** The evaluation team encountered several key limitations with the household survey datasets provided to the team by IPs. This limited the team's ability to use the survey data to answer learning questions in the evaluation scope. These limitations were discussed with USAID and the activity implementers during initial dataset review, the design phase of the evaluation, and during preliminary quantitative analyses. Key constraints are listed below. The results presented in this evaluation report reflect the analyses that are possible given these constraints.
  - In some of the datasets provided to the evaluation team, the household roster identifier, which identified different members of a household, was not uniquely assigned. As a result, it was not possible to correctly link roster-level data across different survey modules, which meant that the evaluation team could not analyze changes across survey years for household individuals.
  - Detailed household asset data was not included in the data made available to the evaluation team. Without these data, the evaluation team could not construct robust proxy variables or indices of household assets, or conduct nuanced analysis of how changes in household assets may have contributed to changes in household overall poverty status.

- Several key covariates that are typically preferable to include in the type of analyses required under the evaluation team's scope were missing from the data sets, including information such as household head's age and years of education, water source (for ACS-USAID), and amount of landholding. Due to the unavailability of such data, the evaluation team could not include these types of variables as covariates in the regression analyses.
- Data on children's nutrition was provided independently of the household survey data, and the datasets could not be linked. This is because data on children's nutrition indicators provided to the evaluation team did not contain identifier variables that would enable linking an individual child in the dataset to a given household in the household survey data. As a result, the evaluation team could not identify which households in the survey data the children belong to, rendering it impossible to conduct quantitative analyses to answer several questions under the evaluation scope with the data provided to the team. This included learning questions 3, 9 and 10, analysis to examine whether malnutrition changed as a result of activity exposure, and relationships between changes in household income and malnutrition status. As a next-best but much less desirable option, the evaluation team took a community-level approach for some of these analysis.
- **Response bias:** The evaluation team selected KII and FGD participants using a purposive sampling approach, to ensure data from the most relevant sources available. However, respondents may be biased in the types of responses they give because of an expectation that the evaluation team is looking for a certain type of answer. To mitigate this kind of biased response, the evaluation team took steps to rigorously test the qualitative instruments and protocols to ensure a clearly stated evaluation purpose, the absence of leading questions or respondent priming, and that respondents feel comfortable speaking openly. The team also took steps during coding and post-interview analysis to identify any strong outlier responses with limited explanations or other evidence that the measurement process appears skewed in some way. Despite these approaches, the evaluation team notes there is no formal way to remove response bias during the analysis phase for qualitative data.
- **Recall bias:** It is possible that some topics related to the evaluation, such as perceptions about specific actors or processes, will be difficult to accurately remember as time passes. Recall bias may lead to exaggerated negative or positive perceptions of past experiences, as people tend to remember only key aspects or feelings over time. A well-crafted KII instrument, appropriate follow-up questions, and the use of secondary data help the evaluation team to mitigate some of the challenges of recall bias.
- **Selection bias:** This evaluation relies on qualitative data based on perceptions and recall using data collected over a short time period. It is likely that not all of the key informants and FGD participants identified will be available or willing to respond to the evaluation team. Those who are willing to share their views may not be representative of FtF project participants. The sampling approach applied in this evaluation aims to select respondents with various experiences and roles in the FtF activities, but the data are still be subject to people's willingness to respond. The evaluation team worked to compose a balanced group of respondents, to minimize selection bias. But, as for all non-random evaluation designs, it may not be possible to completely avoid this challenge.

## 5 EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS BY LEARNING THEME

Section 5 presents findings and conclusion across the qualitative and quantitative analysis conducted for this evaluation, organized by learning theme and sub-question. Each learning theme begins with a summary of key findings across the theme, which synthesizes the econometric and qualitative results across the two FtF activities. Then, within each sub-question under a given learning theme, the econometric results are presented together with the qualitative findings. Qualitative findings by FtF activity include a summary of gender and department-disaggregated differences. Finally, key conclusions are presented at the end of each learning theme section.

## 5.1 LEARNING THEME I: PATHS AND TIMELINES FOR LEAVING POVERTY

The learning questions under Learning Theme I are primarily answered through quantitative analysis of household survey data conducted for the evaluation. Supplemental qualitative findings provide additional context on agricultural and other income-generating activities that households engaged in during the activity lifetimes, and household economic wellbeing. This includes household perceptions on if and how the FtF activities improved their agricultural production, access to markets, incomes, and overall economic wellbeing, together with perceived effectiveness of the activities.

### Key Findings for Learning Theme I

- **Greater years of exposure to the FtF activity is associated with both a higher likelihood that the household saw an increase in their per capita income, and a higher probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line during the FtF lifetime.**
  - ACCESS to Markets: each additional year of exposure to the FtF activity was associated with a \$0.34 increase in household per capita income and a seven percent greater probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line.
  - ACS-USAID: each additional year of exposure to the FtF activity was associated with a \$0.19 increase in household per capita income and a 3.7 percent greater probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line.
- **The gains in per capita daily income among program participants in different income categories were consistent with the FtF activity objectives.**
  - ACCESS to Markets: on average, per capita daily incomes of households with baseline incomes below \$1.25, between \$1.25 and \$1.82, and between \$1.82 and \$2.42 increased by 115.2, 36.0, and 23.4 percent, respectively.
  - ACS-USAID: on average, per capita daily incomes of households with baseline incomes below \$1.25, between \$1.25 and \$1.82, and between \$1.82 and \$2.42 increased by 144.8, 46.4, and 33.3 percent, respectively.

### Qualitative Findings for Learning Theme I

- **There is strong qualitative evidence for improved farming practices, higher yields, and higher incomes as a result, across both of the FtF activities.** For the ACS-USAID sample, this was noted in approximately 40 percent of FGDs and half of the village-level KIs held. For the ACCESS to Markets sample, this was noted in approximately half of FGDs and 30 percent of the village-level KIs.
- **There is evidence of multiple ways in which beneficiaries have been able to realize gains to income through the FtF activities.** Most commonly, *higher yields* allowed beneficiaries to sell greater quantities of products, resulting in additional income. *Higher quality products* allowed them to secure higher prices for their goods at market. Respondents attributed the quality improvements to a variety of changes to farming practices they implemented with the assistance of the FtF activity, including use of appropriate fertilizers, drip irrigation, and others. Additional income was also gained through *production and sale of new types of crops* that beneficiaries had not grown before the start of the FtF activity.
- **Respondents perceived that improvements in product quality were the primary reason for obtaining higher prices at market and higher incomes.** This finding was more strongly expressed by ACCESS to Markets respondents (nearly 80 percent of FGDs, and half of village-level KIs) than in the ACS-USAID sample (nearly 40 percent of both FGDs and village-level KIs). Beneficiaries primarily attributed crop quality improvements to new farming practices, the introduction of drip irrigation, and use of appropriate fertilizers; quality improvements in animal products were attributed to greater use of vaccinations, application of vitamins, deworming, and improved feed.
- **Perceived improvements to income through the FtF activity was corroborated by IP staff and value chain partners.** These partners reported that beneficiaries had been able to increase their agricultural productivity, and that productivity gains led to increased market-based activity and higher incomes.
- **Beneficiaries reported additional improvements to their economic wellbeing that stemmed from spending less on food purchases and bringing in non-agricultural income from new**

**businesses.** However, qualitative data suggest these contributions were less widespread and not as impactful as economic gains from the agricultural production component.

- **Respondents across both FtF activities commonly expressed a desire for additional training or skills development, across a range of issues.**
- **Household drop-outs from activity participation were reported by village-level informants across both of FtF activities.** Qualitative data suggests drop-outs may have been more widespread for ACS-USAID than for ACCESS to Markets, with seasonal migration for coffee harvest as the primary reason.
- **Though men and women agreed their economic wellbeing had increased as a result of FtF activities, they differed on their perception of the underlying reasons.** Men mentioned increased yields, improvements to product quality, and increased agricultural income more than women (about twice as much), while women more commonly highlighted that productivity gains allowed them to spend less household income on food.
- **Within each FtF activity, there is some evidence of differences by department.** For ACS-USAID, qualitative data suggests that Intibucá experienced greater improvements to non-agricultural income than La Paz and Lempira, including income obtained from sale of animal products. For ACCESS to Markets, the data suggests that Copán may have experienced stronger results overall, followed by Santa Bárbara and Ocotepeque.

**1. What factors are associated with households that move above and stay above the poverty line of \$2.42 per person per day? What differentiates successful households from the rest? In addition, what factors are associated with households within each of the three starting income categories below the poverty line that were defined by the project (< \$1.25, \$1.25-\$1.81, and \$1.81-\$2.42 per person per day)?**

To examine the factors that correlate with the poverty status of households, we estimate equation (1) with poverty status of households as the dependent variable and exposure to the programs and household baseline characteristics as explanatory variables in a logistic regression model. Poverty status is defined as whether a household's per capita daily income is above or below the Honduran poverty line of \$2.42 per capita income per day—set at 1 if the household's per capita daily income is at or above the poverty line and 0 if below. We present these results in column 1 (ACCESS to Markets) and 3 (ACS-USAID) of Table 8. Each number reported in columns 1 and 3 represents the likelihood of households in the FtF activity sample to be above the poverty line in the result year of data collection for the household (2016, 2017, and 2018) for a one unit difference in the associated variable<sup>23</sup> (or for the category the household is in, for categorical variables<sup>24</sup>). The most salient result from this analysis is that greater years of exposure to the FtF activity is associated with a higher probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line during the FtF lifetime. For the ACCESS to Markets sample, each additional year of exposure to the FtF activity was associated a seven percent greater probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line. For ACS-USAID, each additional year of exposure to the FtF activity was associated with a 3.7 percent greater probability that the household moved above the Honduran poverty line.

Some household characteristics at baseline are also important factors associated with the likelihood of a household moving above the poverty line. For ACCESS to Markets (Table 8, Column 1), households with at least one member who earned wage income at baseline were less likely to be above the poverty line in the result year. Households with more children under five years of age at baseline and larger households were also less likely to be above the poverty line in the result year. On the other hand, households with higher per capita daily income at baseline were more likely to be above the poverty line in the result year. For example, a \$1 larger per capita daily income at baseline was associated with a 5.9 percent greater probability that the household is above

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<sup>23</sup> For continuous variables, such as age of client.

<sup>24</sup> For categorical variables, such as whether the client in the household is a female compared to male.

the poverty line in the result year.<sup>25</sup> No other variables have statistically significant correlations with the probability of being above the poverty line at the time of results data collection.

The correlations in the ACS-USAID sample were similar (Table 8, Column 3). Households with at least one member who earned wage income at baseline were less likely to be above the poverty line in the result year, as were households with children under five years of age at baseline, and larger households. Lastly, households where women were involved in making decisions on livestock (i.e., what livestock to raise, how to feed and care for the animals, and when and where to sell) at baseline, whether jointly with the male partner or alone, were less likely to be above poverty line in the year of results data collection.

As for the ACCESS to Markets sample, ACS-USAID households with higher per capita daily income at baseline were more likely to be above poverty line in the results year—a \$1 larger per capita daily income was associated with a 7.8 percent greater probability that the household is above the poverty line at the time of results data collection. In addition, clients with greater years of education were more likely to be above the poverty line.

*“If you could see the children of these people that are producing, how they are dressed now, or go to school with their uniform. Before they went barefoot and now they have shoes. Little things that are very important for us. To see children with footwear and they will eat in school, they have money to buy their snack. This is a result of the harvest the producer is sowing in the community.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male, Government Stakeholder KII)*

*“In the production of corn, according to the training the technician gave us, the sowing is different. The last harvest was small. This harvest was three times what I had before. All because of the sowing technique where you only sow one grain.” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Men Agricultural Production FGD)*

**Table 8: Correlations between FtF Activity Exposure and Poverty Status**

| Covariate (baseline values)                      | ACCESS to Markets                       |                               | ACS-USAID                               |                               |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                  | Probability of being above poverty line | Per capita daily income (USD) | Probability of being above poverty line | Per capita daily income (USD) |
|                                                  | (1)                                     | (2)                           | (3)                                     | (4)                           |
| Length of exposure                               | 0.48***<br>(0.05)                       | 0.34***<br>(0.05)             | 0.27***<br>(0.07)                       | 0.19***<br>(0.04)             |
| Age of client                                    | 0.00<br>(0.01)                          | -0.00<br>(0.01)               | 0.00<br>(0.01)                          | 0.00<br>(0.01)                |
| Male client                                      | 0.18<br>(0.16)                          | 0.00<br>(0.15)                | 0.35*<br>(0.18)                         | 0.29***<br>(0.10)             |
| Years of Education of client                     | 0.06*<br>(0.03)                         | 0.02<br>(0.03)                | 0.07**<br>(0.04)                        | -0.00<br>(0.03)               |
| At least one member has wage income <sup>†</sup> | -1.07***<br>(0.14)                      | -0.53***<br>(0.11)            | -0.67***<br>(0.13)                      | -0.49***<br>(0.11)            |
| Household size (number of members)               | -0.09**<br>(0.04)                       | -0.03<br>(0.04)               | -0.14***<br>(0.04)                      | -0.05<br>(0.04)               |

<sup>25</sup> This marginal effect of an unit increase in per capita daily income on the probability of being above the poverty line is calculated from the regression coefficient (which shows the log odds) using STATA's *margins* command.

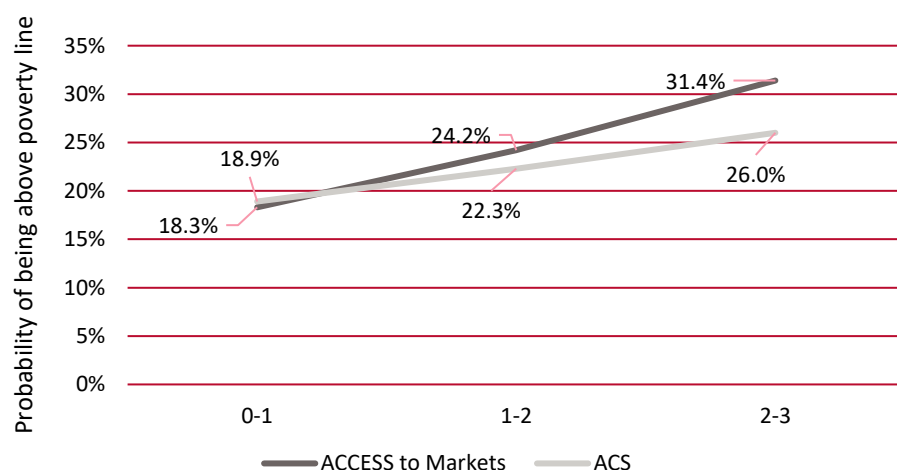
| Covariate (baseline values)                                           | ACCESS to Markets                       |                               | ACS-USAID                               |                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                                       | Probability of being above poverty line | Per capita daily income (USD) | Probability of being above poverty line | Per capita daily income (USD) |
| Number of children under 5                                            | -0.23**<br>(0.10)                       | -0.15**<br>(0.07)             | -0.26**<br>(0.10)                       | -0.15*<br>(0.08)              |
| Owns house                                                            | 0.03<br>(0.22)                          | 0.04<br>(0.15)                | 0.38<br>(0.26)                          | 0.39***<br>(0.15)             |
| Have access to piped water                                            | -0.65**<br>(0.31)                       | 0.03<br>(0.18)                | N/A                                     | N/A                           |
| Own land                                                              | 0.01<br>(0.19)                          | 0.18<br>(0.16)                |                                         |                               |
| Uses drip irrigation                                                  | 0.26<br>(0.23)                          | 0.36<br>(0.23)                | -0.10<br>(0.21)                         | -0.04<br>(0.16)               |
| Per capita daily income (USD)                                         | 0.41***<br>(0.05)                       | 0.70***<br>(0.08)             | 0.58***<br>(0.08)                       | 0.64***<br>(0.08)             |
| Access to credit                                                      | 0.17<br>(0.13)                          | -0.04<br>(0.13)               | -0.08<br>(0.16)                         | -0.01<br>(0.15)               |
| Whether women are involved in decisions (alone or joint) on crops     | 0.10<br>(0.13)                          | 0.04<br>(0.12)                | -0.01<br>(0.14)                         | -0.29**<br>(0.14)             |
| Whether women are involved in decisions (alone or joint) on livestock | -0.14<br>(0.13)                         | -0.18<br>(0.12)               | -0.45***<br>(0.15)                      | -0.27*<br>(0.15)              |
| Standardized values of Asset Index                                    | 0.16***<br>(0.06)                       | 0.22**<br>(0.11)              | 0.17**<br>(0.08)                        | 0.15<br>(0.10)                |
| Constant                                                              | -3.13***<br>(0.46)                      | 0.32<br>(0.38)                | -2.55***<br>(0.57)                      | 1.02**<br>(0.40)              |
| Cohort fixed effects                                                  | Yes                                     | Yes                           | Yes                                     | Yes                           |
| Department fixed effects                                              | Yes                                     | Yes                           | Yes                                     | Yes                           |
| Sample size                                                           | 2,903                                   | 2,903                         | 2,621                                   | 2,621                         |
| R-squared                                                             | 0.23                                    | 0.42                          | 0.22                                    | 0.34                          |

Note: \*\*\*/\*\*/\* Statistically significant at the 0.01/0.05/0.1 level. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors of corresponding regression estimates right above them.

<sup>†</sup> This variable is constructed from a survey question that asks whether household member earned off-farm wages and how much.

To examine the changes in the likelihood of a household moving above the poverty line, we use the same regression analysis presented in Table 8 above. The results show the correlations between the length of exposure to the FtF activities and the probability of households being above the Honduran poverty line. For ACCESS to Markets, more exposure to the activity is associated with a higher likelihood that households will be above the poverty line—seven percent, on average, with each additional year of exposure. This association is statistically significant at the 1 percent level. We observe a similar pattern for ACS-USAID: more exposure to the program is associated with a higher likelihood that households will move above the poverty line. However, for ACS-USAID, this likelihood is smaller than that of ACCESS to markets—3.7 percent, on average, with each additional year of exposure. We present the regression-adjusted probabilities or likelihood of being above the Honduran poverty line of \$2.42 per capital per day against the length of exposure to ACCESS to Markets and ACS in [Figure I](#) below.

Figure 1: Probability of being Above the Honduran Poverty Line with Years of Exposure to the ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID



**Qualitative results also suggest that many FtF activity beneficiaries have seen income and economic well-being improvements during the FtF activity lifetime, which they link to knowledge, practices and other FtF activity support. Across both of the FtF activity qualitative samples, there is an indication that beneficiary households have increased their agricultural production, market-based economic activity, and incomes during the activity lifetime.** In FGDs and KIIs, respondents commonly noted that beneficiaries sell a greater quantity of agricultural products as a result of learning and practices promoted by the FtF activity. Respondents reported that new planting techniques learned through ACS-USAID, especially ensuring proper planting spacing of seeds and using improved seeds, have led to higher yields (ACS-USAID: 9 of 24 FGDs<sup>26</sup> held with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, and in 13 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 12 of 23 FGDs held with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 8 of 29 village-level KIIs, and 5 of 8 department-level KIIs). They also indicated that the higher yields they obtained had led to them selling greater quantities of agricultural products. For some producers, the activity helped them increase production sufficiently to become first-time sellers (ACCESS to Markets: 4 FGDs and 1 village-level KII). In addition to increased production of crops they grew before the start of the FtF activity, respondents also noted increased income from new agricultural products introduced to them through the FtF activity. Respondents noted that beneficiaries now grow and sell new crops<sup>27</sup> and animal products<sup>28</sup> (ACS-USAID: 13 of 24 FGDs held with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and in 10 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 11 of 23 FGDs held with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 9 of 29 village-level KIIs, and 3 of 8 department-level KIIs).

<sup>26</sup> For all qualitative results reporting in this report, such counts report on collective consensus on the issue discussed within the FGD. For the purpose of identifying key themes and trends from the qualitative data across the FtF activity areas, the unit of analysis is the focus group rather than individuals within the group.

<sup>27</sup> Examples noted by ACS-USAID respondents were: avocado, lettuce, beets, radish, coriander, scallion, onions, peppers, string beans, malanga, squash, carrot, watermelon, and yucca. Examples cited by ACCESS to Markets respondents were: cabbage, cucumber, passion fruit, plantain, tomato, avocado, beet, radish, onions, peppers, string beans, squash, carrot, mustard, eggplant, and yucca.

<sup>28</sup> Fish, eggs, dairy products.

*“Before, when we had a product, we had to consume it. Because we did not have the quantity to sell. So we had to consume it all. The other thing is that we did not know [how to grow] the vegetables. I had never sown in [lines] in an unusual way like the one they say. [Before], it did not produce anything, not even the roots.” (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Male Beneficiary KII)*

*“With the vegetables, I am a little new right, but only the fact of producing is already more income.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male Beneficiary KII)*

*“We have options now because if we produce a lot we can benefit another person. Some people are left without harvest and if we have product we can sell them a part.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Women Processors/Value-Added FGD)*

*“To be honest the market has benefited a lot in the communities, specifically with vegetables. They come and buy, but especially cucumbers, many cars come to buy cucumbers here. Things that have never been cultivated in the community. Today, we are watching and people change their situation, change their houses, change their wardrobe, and change their food, everything changes.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male Government Stakeholder KII)*

Department-level KIIs in ACS-USAID areas reported similar findings, noting that beneficiaries were experiencing improved agricultural productivity, which had also translated to increased market-based activity and improved incomes (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 2 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners, and 1 of 3 KIIs with financial service partners).

**In addition to improved agricultural yields, there is evidence that the FtF activities have also improved the quality of agricultural products, allowing beneficiaries to secure higher prices.** This evidence is stronger in the ACCESS to Markets sample. Respondents reported that quality improvements as a result of implementing new agricultural practices promoted by the FtF activity have enabled beneficiaries to sell their agricultural products at higher prices (ACS-USAID: 9 of 24 FGDs and 12 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 18 of 23 FGDs, 13 of 29 village-level KIIs, and 4 of 8 department-level KIIs). For crops, beneficiaries primarily attributed these quality improvements to the introduction or greater use of drip irrigation, organic certification, and use of appropriate fertilizers. Quality improvements in animal products were attributed to greater use of vaccinations, application of vitamins, deworming, and improved feed.

*“Sales prices have improved with the feeding scale for the little pigs; the vaccines and removal of the teeth, which helps them consume the food more easily. The pigs get prettier, therefore we have better prices.” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Female Beneficiary KII)*

*“Quality has changed because we offer 100 percent organic products, which is what the producer takes to the market, a higher product, more commercial. Because it is a product free of chemicals it has a better price. There are many people that have seen the difference to improve the price.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Male Government and/or Other Nutrition and Health Stakeholder KII)*

*“We improved the soil and we also improved the sale in markets, because before, when the onions reached the market, they had thrown water on the onions, they were flooded and the amount of water wasn’t measured, bacteria attacked it. But when it’s produced through irrigation system, it becomes a well-treated onion and it’s solid and since water hasn’t entered it, it doesn’t carry bacteria and it gets to the market in optimal condition.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Male Government and/or Other Nutrition and Health Stakeholder KII)*

*“Soil preparation, products to prevent pests/diseases, etc., the implementation of these practices have enabled producers to produce at higher quality, and sell at higher prices.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Male Department-Level KII)*

Department-level KIIs in ACS-USAID areas also noted the relationship between improved product quality and higher prices. KII respondents reported that higher quality enabled producers to negotiate higher prices for their products (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 3 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners, and 2 of 3 KIIs with financial service partners).

**Less commonly, respondents noted that beneficiaries spend less money on certain foods and productive inputs as a result of crop diversification and improved agricultural practices promoted by the FtF activity.** While evidence for this was less strong, respondents noted that the diversification of crops grown in their communities has helped beneficiaries reduce their household spending on food purchases (ACS-USAID: 6 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 2 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 6 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and 1 of 29 village-level KIIs). Respondents indicated they consume more food produced on their own land and are able to trade or donate some of their harvest to neighbors. Respondents also highlighted spending less money on certain agricultural inputs, such as fertilizer or insecticide (ACS-USAID: 4 FGDs and 3 KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 4 FGDs). Some respondents also identified savings realized by needing to purchase fewer seeds and through lower veterinary bills for livestock.

*“In the farm, one has bananas, oranges, all those fruits, and those fruits you are not going to buy them in the city, that’s money that we save.” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Men Agricultural Production)*

*“We used to buy corn a lot, not anymore. Rather, [now] we sell a load of corn. Not before. Corn didn’t even [become ready to harvest] until May, and by July we were already buying it.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Women Agricultural Production)*

*“Since we are neighbors, we are close, so I’m benefited by her chickens. Before, I had to pay 100 lempiras for the mototaxi to go to buy chickens and now I don’t have to pay those 100 lempiras because I go to her place to buy them.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Women Agricultural Production FGD)*

*“Yes, previously we could not harvest a quantity, we needed to buy. Now with the techniques we acquire there is a big improvement because we do not buy anymore, now we have food for the household.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Women Processors/Value-Added FGD)*

**Respondents also noted increased non-agricultural income streams for beneficiaries.** Support for this was less widespread than evidence for increased agricultural incomes, but in some FGDs the consensus was that households have obtained more income from non-agricultural



*Value-added beneficiaries in Copán making chips*

sources<sup>29</sup>. In 3 FGDs, respondents said that equipment donated by ACS-USAID increased their production efficiency and therefore their incomes. Examples of equipment cited include ovens, mixers, stoves, freezers, scales, blenders, sealers, and fryers. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents noted that ACCESS to Markets assistance has led to the development of new processed food products (6 FGDs, 3 village-level KIs), including chips, bread, dairy products, and new dishes served in restaurants. Respondents also said that technical assistance and donated equipment (especially coffee dryers) increased their incomes by enabling them to improve product quality (4 FGDs, 7 village-level KIs).

**Despite gains they experienced, beneficiaries indicated they would like more training in a variety of topics, to further strengthen or sustain gains to their economic situation.**

Consensus on a need for additional training was strong across both FtF activity samples (ACS-USAID: 14 of 24 FGDs and 5 of 16 KIs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries; ACCESS to Markets: 14 of 23 FGDs and 2 of 17 village-level KIs). The types of training most commonly requested include livestock breeding (ACS-USAID: 4 FGDs, 1 KI; ACCESS to Markets: 6 FGDs), new product development (ACS-USAID: 5 FGDs, 1 KI; ACCESS to Markets: 6 FGDs), business/legal skills (ACS-USAID: 5 FGDs, 2 KIs; ACCESS to Markets: 0 FGDs), and production skills (ACS-USAID: 6 FGDs, 1 KI; ACCESS to Markets: 6 FGDs, 2 village-level KIs). Topics in livestock breeding included raising new types of animals (e.g., pigs, cattle, chickens, etc.) as well as learning new animal management skills (e.g., fencing in, veterinary skills like birthing). For the ACS-USAID sample, production-related topics included improving product quality, using natural alternatives to chemicals, growing new crops like pineapples and mangoes, and water soluble fertilizers. As for new product development, beneficiaries requested additional training in producing banana chips, jams, candies, bakery products, and quesillo. For ACCESS to Markets, respondents mentioned beekeeping, growing new crops like passionfruit, making silage, and using fertilizers. As for new product development, beneficiaries requested additional training or skills development related to producing plantain chips, bakery products, pizza, and dairy products.

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*“In the case of sweets, it helped me a lot because [before] I only worked with two types of sweets, now I work with six types. We made tests and that is how I learned. Also, it helped me open another type of business.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Women Processors/Value Added FGD)*

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*“Personally, my husband has received a lot of help from USAID. He buys coffee. He was afraid to refine coffee [before] and [now] thanks to the engineers and the technicians, he moved from selling wet coffee to dry coffee and it has better prices thanks to USAID.” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Women Processors/Value-added FGD)*

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**Differences by Gender:** There were no differences in key agricultural production and income findings across genders, for both of the FtF qualitative samples. However, there are some gender-based differences in composition of respondents who provided information on specific topics. Men comprised the vast majority of respondents who noted increased yields and sale of agricultural products (ACS-USAID: 6 FGDs and 11 village-level KIs with men; 3 FGDs, 2 village-level KIs with women; ACCESS to Markets: 9 FGDs and 8 village-level KIs with men; 3 FGDs with women), as well as increased quality of products (6 FGDs and 9 village-level KIs with men; 3 FGDs and 3 village-level KIs with women). Respondents who noted reductions in the amount of money spent on agricultural inputs were also primarily male (3 FGDs and 3 village-level KI with men; 1 FGD with women). Respondents who noted reductions in food spending were majority female (4 FGDs and 1 village-level KI with women; 2 FGDs and 1 village-level KI with men). Men were also the majority of respondents who mentioned improved access to an irrigation system as a key factor for increased household incomes (6 FGDs, 16 village-level KIs with men; 3 FGDs with women). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, only women requested additional training related to new product development (6 FGDs). Additional skills development for livestock breeding was requested more often by men (4 FGDs) than women (2 FGDs). The type of livestock mentioned

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<sup>29</sup> Implementers note that increasing non-agricultural income for beneficiaries was part of the overall strategy to increase household incomes, but did not have the same activity effort as the agricultural production component.

also differed by gender, reflective of gendered norms on livestock keeping. Men's interests focused on cattle, while women were interested in skills development for raising pigs and hens.

**Differences by Department:** In the ACS-USAID sample: Only respondents in Intibucá mentioned beneficiaries selling animal products introduced by ACS-USAID. The majority of respondents who noted reductions in the amount of money beneficiaries spend on agricultural inputs were from Intibucá (4 FGDs and 1 village-level KII Intibucá, 1 village-level KII La Paz, 1 village-level KII Lempira). Increases in non-agricultural income were mentioned more often in Intibucá (5 FGDs) than in La Paz (1 FGD, 2 village-level KIIs) or Lempira (2 FGDs). This pattern of findings by ACS-USAID department is reflected for several learning themes. The preliminary suggestion is that Intibucá's results may be more positive overall, followed by La Paz, and finally Lempira.

In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in Copán (5 FGDs, 5 village-level KIIs) and Ocotepeque (5 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) noted increased yields due to planting techniques more so than respondents in Santa Bárbara (2 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs). Consensus on product quality increases leading to increased agricultural incomes was in each of the FGDs held in Copán (8 FGDs, 7 village-level KIIs), but was also common in the other two departments (two-thirds of the FGDs held in Ocotepeque (5 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) and Santa Bárbara (5 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs). Increases to non-agricultural household income among beneficiaries was more commonly noted in Copán (3 FGDs, 4 KIIs) and Santa Bárbara (2 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) than in Ocotepeque (1 FGD). This pattern of findings suggests that Copán may have experienced stronger results overall, followed by Santa Bárbara and Ocotepeque. Perhaps related to the above, respondents in Ocotepeque (7 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) requested additional training more frequently than respondents in Santa Bárbara (4 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) and Copán (3 FGDs). In Ocotepeque, the most commonly requested training focused on livestock breeding (cow) and production skills. In Copán and Santa Bárbara, the most commonly requested training was production skills and new product development (dairy, chips, bakery products in Santa Bárbara; and bakery products, pizza, plantain chips in Copán) and production skills.

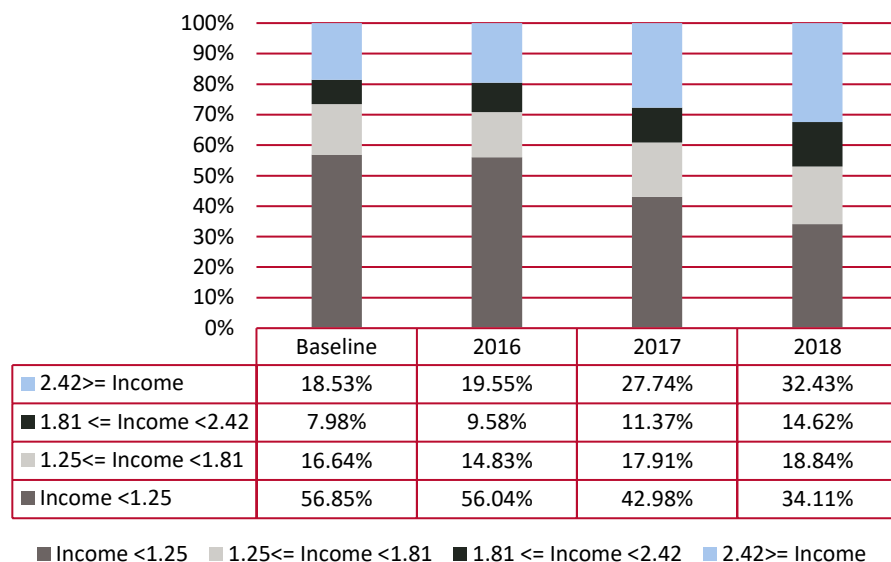
## **2. What are the paths and timelines for families to leave poverty, and to move across the three starting income categories defined by the project? What are the patterns (including gender dynamics) for families that do not leave poverty or move out of their starting income category?**

The results presented previously in Table 8 examine the likelihood of households to move above the Honduran poverty line of \$2.42 per capita income per day with program exposure. However, more than half of the sample households have per capita daily income of less than \$1.25 and it may take those households years before their income improves enough to move them above the poverty line. Moreover, the FtF activities worked with three poverty thresholds below the Honduran poverty line, with an aim of moving households within each of these lower thresholds up and into a higher income category (though still below the national poverty line)<sup>30</sup>. To examine the paths and timelines for households in these different income categories at baseline towards leaving poverty, we first present the distribution of households across the different income categories at baseline, 2016, 2017, and 2018. This is shown in [Figure 2](#) (ACCESS to Markets) and [Figure 3](#) (ACS-USAID).

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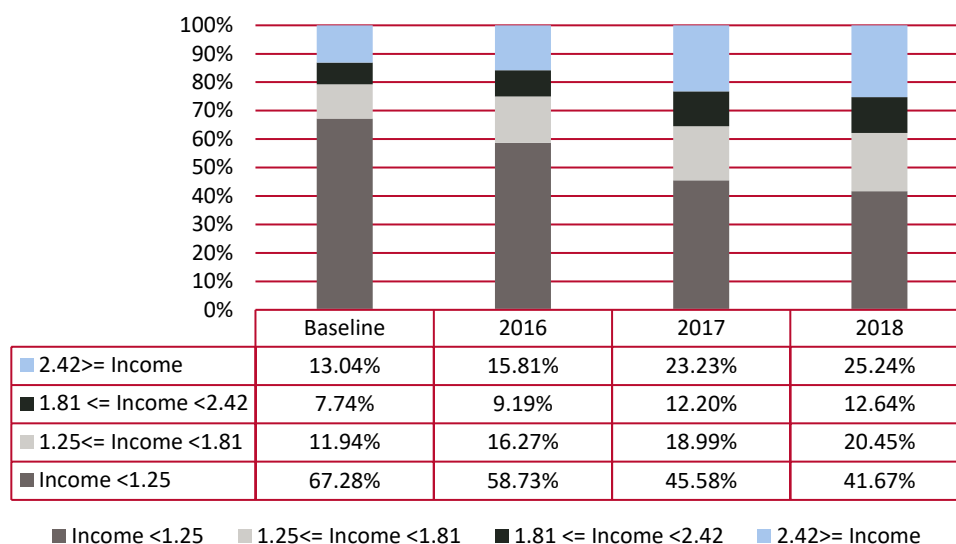
<sup>30</sup> See ACCESS to Markets high-level goals, presented in Section 1.

Figure 2: Distribution of Households Across Different Income Categories at Baseline, 2016, 2017, and 2018 (ACCESS to Markets)



For ACCESS to Markets, 56.9 percent households in the sample had per capita daily income below \$1.25 at baseline, 16.6 had per capita daily income between \$1.25 and \$1.81, 7.98 percent had per capita daily income between \$1.81 and \$2.42, and 18.5 percent per capita daily income at or above the Honduran poverty line of \$2.42. Figure 2 shows that in 2016, the proportion of households in the two lower income categories was smaller, while the proportion of households in the higher two income categories had grown. In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of households in the lowest income category further decreased to 42.9 and 34.1 percent, respectively, while the three higher income categories had larger proportions compared to 2016. This shift in the distribution of households across income categories from lower to high income categories indicate rising per capita incomes among program participants from baseline through the program years.

Figure 3: Distribution of Households Across Different Income Categories at Baseline, 2016, 2017, and 2018 (ACS-USAID)



We also observe a similar pattern for ACS-USAID (Figure 3). The proportion of households in the lowest income category of less than \$1.25 per capita daily income decreased from 67.3 percent at baseline to 58.7 percent in 2016, 45.6 percent in 2017, and 41.7 percent in 2018. At the same time, the proportion of households in each of the three higher income category grew, indicating a steady increase in per capita income across households in the ACS-USAID sample over the program years.

The figures above show a positive trend in moving households in the poorest income category towards upper income categories across years. However, because new cohorts of households were added every year, from 2015 to 2017, the differences between baseline and 2016 or baseline and 2017 imply different dynamics for different parts of the sample. For example, there are three cohorts represented in the 2017 data with different levels of exposure to the program. Because they have different levels of exposure and also different characteristics, the overall distribution of households across income categories as presented in Figures 2 and 3 may mask nuances in program effectiveness. As discussed before, it is desirable from the programmatic perspective that households exposed to the program for a longer period of time exhibit better outcomes given their characteristics. To that end, we use a multivariate regression analysis to examine the correlations between the likelihood that a household in a particular income category will move up to an upper income category and program exposure, given their baseline income and accounting for household characteristics at baseline. We present this result in Table 9 below.

**Table 9: Correlations between Program Exposure and Movement across Income Categories**

|                              | ACCESS to Markets                              | ACS-USAID                                      |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|                              | Probability of moving up the income categories | Probability of moving up the income categories |
|                              | (1)                                            | (2)                                            |
| Length of exposure           | 0.21***                                        | -0.06                                          |
|                              | (0.05)                                         | (0.06)                                         |
| Age of client                | -0.00                                          | -0.00                                          |
|                              | (0.00)                                         | (0.00)                                         |
| Male client                  | 0.09                                           | 0.14                                           |
|                              | (0.09)                                         | (0.11)                                         |
| Years of Education of client | 0.02                                           | 0.00                                           |
|                              | (0.02)                                         | (0.02)                                         |

|                                      |          |          |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| At least one member has wage income  | -0.17**  | -0.08    |
|                                      | (0.08)   | (0.08)   |
| Household size (number of members)   | -0.10*** | -0.06*** |
|                                      | (0.02)   | (0.02)   |
| Number of children under 5           | -0.06    | -0.26*** |
|                                      | (0.06)   | (0.06)   |
| Owens house                          | -0.05    | -0.09    |
|                                      | (0.13)   | (0.15)   |
| Have access to piped water           | -0.52*** | N/A      |
|                                      | (0.19)   |          |
| Own land                             | 0.18*    | 0.18*    |
|                                      | (0.10)   | (0.10)   |
| Uses drip irrigation                 | 0.05     | 0.24**   |
|                                      | (0.14)   | (0.12)   |
| Per capita daily income (USD)        | -0.20*** | -0.24*** |
|                                      | (0.03)   | (0.03)   |
| Access to credit                     | -0.01    | -0.11    |
|                                      | (0.08)   | (0.09)   |
| Women involve in crop decision       | 0.06     | -0.01    |
|                                      | (0.07)   | (0.08)   |
| Women involves in livestock decision | 0.09     | 0.05     |
|                                      | (0.08)   | (0.09)   |
| Standardized values of Asset Index   | 0.01     | 0.01     |
|                                      | (0.04)   | (0.03)   |
| Constant                             | -1.07*** | 0.21     |
|                                      | (0.29)   | (0.33)   |
| Cohort fixed effects                 | Yes      | Yes      |
| Department fixed effects             | Yes      | Yes      |
| Sample size                          | 2,903    | 2,621    |
| R-squared                            | 0.03     | 0.03     |

Note: \*\*\*/\*\*/\* Statistically significant at the 0.01/0.05/0.1 level. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors of corresponding regression estimates right above them.

As seen from the first row of [Table 9](#), for ACCESS to Markets, there is a statistically significant correlation between program exposure and the likelihood that a household will move up an income category. In other words, if a household starts in the lowest income category (per capita daily income below \$1.25) at baseline, then the household has a statistically significant chance of moving up to a higher income category. The log odds for this chance is 0.21 as shown in the table, which translates into a probability of 4.1 percent. While the correlations between program exposure and the likelihood of moving up an income category is negative for the ACS-USAID sample, it is not statistically significant, meaning that is not statistically different from a null result (zero). This result is not contradictory to Figure 3, which showed a steady improvement in the distribution of households across income categories over the years. In this analysis, for example, results for the 2015 cohort in 2017 is associated with an exposure of 2-3 years, while the results for the 2017 cohort in 2017 is associated with an exposure of 0-1 year.

In addition, note that there is a statistically significant negative relationship between household per capita daily income at baseline and the probability of moving up an income category. This implies that households in the lower income category at baseline are more likely to move up compared to those in the upper income categories, which is also desirable when programs are targeting the poorest households. In [Table 10](#) below, we

show the different probabilities for households in each income category at baseline to move up from their income category in the result years after program exposure, calculated from the multivariate regression results in Table 9.

**Table 10: Probability of Moving up from Different Baseline Income Categories**

| Per capita daily income (X) | Probability of moving up a given income category |           |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|
|                             | ACCESS to Markets                                | ACS-USAID |
| $X < 1.25$                  | 31.54%                                           | 31.09%    |
| $1.25 \leq X < 1.81$        | 29.57%                                           | 30.34%    |
| $1.81 \leq X < 2.42$        | 29.83%                                           | 28.64%    |
| $2.42 \leq X$               | 20.80%                                           | 20.43%    |

This learning question is answered primarily through the quantitative analysis. Here, we also summarize supplemental qualitative findings related to whether the FtF activities experienced high levels of household or beneficiary drop-outs in the USAID-supported activities, and reasons why. This emerged as an issue of interest due to the higher rate of attrition in the ACS-USAID household survey sample. As a result, the evaluation team was asked to take steps to better understand potential reasons for this, including whether this could relate to households dropping out or discontinuing their participation in the FtF activity (as opposed to simply attriting out of implementing partners' household survey sample for reasons such as non-availability at the time of survey or other). As part of that effort, the evaluation team included questions on the qualitative protocols regarding activity participation and reasons why households may drop out, which also ties to beneficiary perceptions of activity effectiveness. These findings are summarized below.

**Household drop-outs from activity participation were reported by village-level KIIs for both of the FtF activities, but the qualitative data suggests this may have more widespread for ACS-USAID than for ACCESS to Markets.** Prevalence and reasons for households choosing to discontinue their participation in the ACS-USAID activity were discussed in village-level KIIs with beneficiaries, government officials, and other nutrition and health stakeholders. In 11 of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents reported varying levels of household dropout from ACS-USAID participation. Seasonal migration for the coffee harvest was the most commonly mentioned reason for households to decide to discontinue their participation in ACS-USAID (5 KIIs).

*“When [ACS-USAID] started, many people were interested in participating, but when they saw what was required, they didn’t care that much [to continue participating in the ACS activity]. From 60 people that initially came, maybe half remained [as activity beneficiaries]...I think it was mostly [due to] time. Lack of time, lack of interest, because most migrate to the north and within Honduras, for example to Comayagua, to work, so it’s difficult for them to organize.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Male Beneficiary KII)*

*“One reason is for family reasons, because they have to work or move to work. Migration. It is only seasonal, for coffee season. We have a certain number of people who leave the village to cut coffee in other places... We are talking about 20 percent more or less...” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Male Government and/or Other Nutrition and Health Stakeholder KII)*

In five village-level KIIs, respondents reported there had been no dropouts in their area since the start of the ACS-USAID activity. Department-level KIIs reported that while the majority of beneficiaries stuck with the project, they did observe dropouts (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 2 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners). In these instances, respondents reported that beneficiaries who dropped out did so because of tense group dynamics (1 KII with ACS-USAID staff), difficulty adhering to promoted practices (3 KII with ACS-USAID staff, 2

KIIs with value chain partners) and extreme weather conditions that compromised harvest (1 KII with ACS-USAID staff).

Some level of household dropouts from ACCESS to Markets participation was reported by respondents in seven of 29 village-level KIIs. These respondents noted that the most common reason for beneficiaries to discontinue their participation in ACCESS to Markets was that they viewed the trainings as a waste of time (6 village-level KIIs). The timing of trainings or beneficiaries' ability to integrate them into their work day may have been a contributing factor; as one female village-level KII respondent in Ocotepeque explained: *"The men work and suddenly at four o'clock in the afternoon, they have to leave for the meeting, or even at three there are colleagues that have to leave. The meeting finishes late. And you have noticed he really comes home tired and starts doing things around the house and [by then] he is too lazy to come to the trainings."* Other respondents mentioned that beneficiaries wanted money or tangible goods instead of technical assistance (4 village-level KIIs), while others noted that delays in irrigation projects had caused beneficiaries in their area to stop participating (3 village-level KIIs). Respondents in only two village-level KIIs said there had been no dropouts in their areas since the start of ACCESS to Markets activities.

*"When some people arrived at the trainings the USAID technicians were giving, they wanted [the irrigation system] quickly... When they didn't see it like that... some dropped out."* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Male Beneficiary KII)

**Differences by Gender:** There were no differences in these findings across genders for either of the qualitative sample.

**Differences by Department:** In the ACS-USAID sample, households deciding to discontinue their participation in ACS-USAID was more widely reported in Lempira and La Paz than in Intibucá. In Intibucá, only two of five village-level KIIs reported any household dropouts from ACS-USAID activities, while it was reported in all village-level KIIs held in Lempira (4 of 4) and 5 of 7 village-level KIIs held in La Paz. The estimated extent of dropouts varied widely across different KIIs. On the upper end, one KII respondent in Intibucá reported that the number of ACS-USAID beneficiaries in her community had dropped from 60 to 16. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, households deciding to discontinue their participation in ACCESS to Markets activities was only reported in two of the three departments: Ocotepeque (4 village-level KIIs) and Santa Bárbara (4 village-level KIIs). Dropouts were not reported in village-level KIIs in Copán. Respondents could not provide numerical estimates for the number of drop outs in their area. There were no differences across departments in terms of the main reasons cited for why some people decided to stop participating in ACCESS to Markets activities.

### **3. Is it possible that the focus and intensity of the effort can meet the objectives for increasing income and reducing malnutrition? If not, why not? If yes, what assumptions must be met?**

This question is answered based on the sum of quantitative results and evaluation evidence, noting that limitations in the household survey data preclude a nuanced analysis. The results on whether exposure (intensity) to the FtF activities is associated with increased income are presented in [Table 8](#), and provide evidence that more years of beneficiary exposure to the FtF activity is associated with increased income. An additional year of exposure to the program was associated with a \$0.51 increase in per capita daily income in the ACCESS to Markets sample and a \$0.34 increase in per capita daily income in the ACS sample, on average. In addition, results for Learning Question 2 provide evidence that on net a greater proportion of households in the survey sample moved into higher income categories over the years of analysis during the FtF activity lifetime, both for ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID.

However, it is likely that households in different income categories at baseline are likely to benefit from the programs differently. In fact, the FtF activity has the objective to increase household per capita daily income by different amounts for households in different income categories at baseline:

- o By 114 percent, for households with baseline incomes below \$1.25 per capita per day
- o By 50 percent, for households with baseline incomes between \$1.25 and \$1.81 per capita per day
- o By 32 percent, for households with baseline incomes between \$1.81 and \$2.42 per capita per day

We calculated the per capita daily income of households in these three income categories at baseline as predicted by the multivariate regression analysis (that takes into account the variation in program exposure and household background characteristics) to compare with their baseline incomes, as presented in [Table 11](#) and [Table 12](#)<sup>31</sup>. For ACCESS to Markets, per capita daily income of households with baseline incomes below \$1.25, between \$1.25 and \$1.81, and between \$1.81 and \$2.42 increased by 115.2, 36.0, and 23.4 percent, respectively. These results suggests that the activity focus and intensity for the ACCESS to Markets program improved household incomes above the activity targets described in Section 1.2 for the lowest income category and came close to the target amounts for the two higher income categories, but did not fully achieve them during the 2015-2018 time frame analyzed. For ACS-USAID, per capita daily income of households with baseline incomes below \$1.25, between \$1.25 and \$1.81, and between \$1.81 and \$2.42 increased by 144.8, 46.4, and 33.3 percent, respectively, suggesting achievement of the targets set by the FtF activity objectives for two of the three income categories. The analysis suggests the activity focus and intensity may have been sufficient to achieve these goals within the five-year time frame of the activity, although the 4-year timeframe available for analysis cannot speak to the longer-term stability of these achievements.

**Table 11: Changes in Average Per Capita Daily Income (US\$) from Baseline, by Income Categories (ACCESS to Markets)**

| Per capita daily income (X) categories | Baseline Average | Regression adjusted average predicted income after program exposure | Percentage change from baseline |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| X < \$1.25                             | \$0.66           | \$1.42                                                              | 115.2%                          |
| \$1.25 ≤ X < \$1.81                    | \$1.49           | \$2.03                                                              | 36.0%                           |
| \$1.81 ≤ X < \$2.42                    | \$2.09           | \$2.58                                                              | 23.4%                           |

**Table 12: Changes in Average Per Capita Daily Income (US\$) from Baseline, by Income Categories (ACS-USAID)**

| Per capita daily income (X) categories | Baseline Average | Regression adjusted average predicted income after program exposure | Percentage change from baseline |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| X < \$1.25                             | \$0.62           | \$1.51                                                              | 144.8%                          |
| \$1.25 ≤ X < \$1.81                    | \$1.49           | \$2.18                                                              | 46.4%                           |
| \$1.81 ≤ X < \$2.42                    | \$2.09           | \$2.79                                                              | 33.3%                           |

The evaluation team is not able to provide a comprehensive statement on whether the focus and intensity of the FtF activity can meet objectives to reduce malnutrition, because the malnutrition data that was available for the evaluation team to work with was not usable to answer this question. This is because the malnutrition data available for children under five years of age was not linkable to households in the survey dataset, such that

<sup>31</sup> We have presented the unadjusted average incomes of households in 2018, the latest year for which we have results data, to compare with the baseline averages in Tables 25 (ACCESS to Markets) and Table 26 (ACS-USAID) in the Annex I.

analysis of malnutrition outcomes at the level of individual households was not possible. However, results presented in Learning Theme 4 provide some insights into this at the community level.

### Learning Theme 1 Conclusions

- Econometric analysis and qualitative data suggest that FtF activity beneficiary households have seen improvements to their household income during the FtF activity lifetime.
- There is evidence that greater years of exposure to the FtF activity is associated with a higher likelihood the household will move above the Honduran poverty line.
- Econometric analysis estimates that households in the lowest income category with less than \$1.25 in per capita daily income at baseline gained the most from the FtF activities, but gains for upper income categories were also in line with FtF activity objectives.
- Some household characteristics at baseline are important factors associated with the likelihood a household moved above the Honduran poverty line during the FtF activity lifetime. These are intuitive, and include being better off at baseline and having fewer younger children.
- Qualitative findings suggest that improved farming practices and related support by the FtF activities contributed to gains on household income through (1) higher agricultural yields, which enabled beneficiaries to sell more quantity of products; (2) improved quality of agricultural products, which enabled beneficiaries to obtain better prices for their goods at market; and (3) production and sale of new and more profitable types of crops. Introduction and more widespread use of drip irrigation and appropriate fertilizers were seen as key factors leading to improved quality of crops, hence greater income.
- The FtF activity focus on assisting new business development and processing activities also contributed to improved household economic wellbeing. These contributions appear less impactful than the agricultural production component / support of the FtF activities, perhaps because implementation focused less on these interventions.
- The sum of the evidence for LTI suggests that given the FtF activity objectives to increase household per capita income by 32, 50 or 114 percent, depending on the baseline income category they were in, the evaluation team's analysis suggests the activity focus and intensity was sufficient to achieve these goals within the five-year time frame of the activity.

## 5.2 LEARNING THEME 2: ASSET GROWTH, WEALTH FORMATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The learning questions under Learning Theme 2 are primarily answered through econometric analysis of household survey data made available to the evaluation team. The econometric results are augmented with qualitative findings related to household perceptions on income changes during the FtF activity lifetime, how households use additional income, including the type of investments they choose to make, and how they deal with unexpected expenses. The qualitative data also provide insights into the nature of challenges that households face with respect to production and market access, and related challenges for asset growth and lasting economic improvements.

### Key Findings for Learning Theme 2

- **Exposure to the program had statistically significant correlations with increases in working capital for both ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID.** Increases in working capital was indicated by a larger amount of investments households made during the result years 2016-2018.
- **Econometric analysis also suggests that households in both FtF activities made investments in their homes, while ACS-USAID households additionally invested in their farms.** These findings may indicate that households prefer to initially use income gains to meet basic household needs at home in the shorter term, followed by investing in additional fixed assets as those basic household needs are met.

### Qualitative Findings for Learning Theme 2

- **Beneficiaries in both samples indicated that additional income generated through the FtF activities was primarily used to cover necessary household expenses, including food, education, and health care.** Across both samples, there is also strong evidence that households use additional income gained through the FtF activities to mitigate economic shocks. The qualitative data did not provide evidence of households using additional income explicitly to mitigate climate shocks.

- **Beneficiaries in both samples indicated that leftover surplus income was invested in their farms, homes, and businesses.** These three types of investments were mentioned with similar frequency in the USAID-ACS sample. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, productive investments were most common, followed by business investments and home improvements.
- **One third of each sample reported an increased ability to save as a result of their participation in the FtF activity.** In some cases, respondents attributed increased savings to trainings or sensitization received through the FtF activity.
- **Respondents highlighted economic constraints on production, especially the high cost of productive inputs and materials, as the major barrier to realizing intended outcomes.** This was mentioned in 70 percent of FGDs in each FtF activity. Water management and availability were also identified as challenges by respondents, though less commonly (30 percent of ACS-USAID FGDs; 60 percent of ACCESS to Markets FGDs). Land constraints (including lack of ownership of their farmland, insufficient land to take on new crops, and inability to expand their landholdings, whether through purchase or otherwise) were raised as a challenge in one-third of the ACCESS to Markets FGDs, but did not emerge as a key issue in the ACS-USAID sample. Also unique to the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample were calls for more in-depth extension support and training from technicians.
- **Respondents commonly noted transportation challenges as a key constraint to improved market access.** Both a lack of vehicles and poor quality roads were frequently discussed as constraints on market access in both samples. These transportation challenges were highlighted in 45 percent of the ACS-USAID FGDs, and 60 percent of the ACCESS to Markets FGDs. They were also commonly cited as reasons why producers continued to obtain lower prices at market.
- **There is evidence that ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets have connected more producers to markets, however some respondents still reported various challenges or barriers to entry.** This was particularly noted in the ACS-USAID sample, including difficulties meeting volume demands of market partners (half of ACS-USAID FGDs), and ongoing challenges with regulatory or formalization processes such as obtaining permits or licenses (25 percent of ACS-USAID FGDs). Difficulty meeting quality standards or not understanding the requirements was also noted. These issues were also present in the ACCESS to Market qualitative sample, but were less commonly highlighted (17 and 13 percent of ACCESS to Markets FGDs, respectively). For both FGD samples, there is evidence that these challenges have resulted in beneficiaries continuing to sell to intermediaries despite lower potential profits (30 percent of ACS-USAID sample; 60 percent of the ACCESS to Markets sample).
- **Differences by gender appear to be minor.** In line with the emphasis of different FtF activities across genders, men primarily mentioned using additional income for farm investments, while the majority of respondents who noted using income to invest in businesses were female.
- **The type of investments made with additional income generated by FtF activities differed slightly across departments.** Among the ACS-USAID sample, farm investments were more commonly noted in La Paz, business investments were more commonly noted in Intibucá, and using additional income to cover household costs was more commonly mentioned by respondents in Intibucá and La Paz. Overall, respondents in Lempira less commonly discussed being able to use income surpluses to make additional investments of any kind. Other findings did not have strongly substantive differences by department for either of the two FtF activities.

#### 4. **Has the FtF intervention influenced asset growth and working capital increase? If so, has it been used for long-term wealth formation, invested in working capital to expand production or has it been used to generate income to cover household costs or to confront climate shocks?**

To examine whether exposure (intensity) to the FtF activities is associated with changes in household asset growth and working capital increase, we re-estimate equation (1) with the following three variables as

dependent variables in separate regressions<sup>32</sup>, while using exposure to the programs and household baseline characteristics as explanatory variables in each regression:

- (1) Amount of investment:<sup>33</sup> We examine this variable as a proxy for working capital.
- (2) Whether the household made investments on-farm:<sup>34</sup> We use this variable to examine whether households made long-term productive investments in their farms.
- (3) Whether the household made investments in the home: We use this variable to examine whether households used income for short-term needs.

**Table 13: Correlations between Program Exposure and Assets and Investments**

|                                     | ACCESS to Markets |                          |                          | ACS-USAID       |                          |                          |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                     | Amount invested   | Whether invested in farm | Whether invested in home | Amount invested | Whether invested in farm | Whether invested in home |
|                                     | (1)               | (2)                      | (3)                      | (4)             | (5)                      | (6)                      |
| Length of exposure                  | 1,797.31*         | -0.34***                 | 0.66***                  | 2,444.55***     | 0.22***                  | 0.26**                   |
|                                     | (1,025.43)        | (0.07)                   | (0.08)                   | (643.66)        | (0.08)                   | (0.08)                   |
| Baseline background characteristics | Yes               | Yes                      | Yes                      | Yes             | Yes                      | Yes                      |
| Cohort fixed effects                | Yes               | Yes                      | Yes                      | Yes             | Yes                      | Yes                      |
| Department fixed effects            | Yes               | Yes                      | Yes                      | Yes             | Yes                      | Yes                      |
| Model                               | OLS               | Logistic                 | Logistic                 | OLS             | Logistic                 | Logistic                 |
| Sample size                         | 2,903             | 2,903                    | 2,903                    | 2,621           | 2,621                    | 2,621                    |
| R-squared                           | 0.02              | 0.10                     | 0.07                     | 0.05            | 0.09                     | 0.03                     |

Note: \*\*\*/\*\*/\* Statistically significant at the 0.01/0.05/0.1 level. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors of corresponding regression estimates right above them.

Table 13 presents the correlations between length of exposure to ACCESS to Markets and the three variables described above (Columns 1-3) and between length of exposure to ACS-USAID and the same three variables (Column 4-6). The regressions include all background exploratory variables listed in Table 8. For brevity, we only present coefficients for the variable indicating length of activity exposure. As seen in Table 13, exposure to the program had statistically significant correlations with increases in working capital, proxied by amount of investment made, for both ACCESS to Markets and ACS-USAID. For ACCESS to Markets, households were more likely to invest their additional working capital in the home and less likely to invest them on the farm. This may indicate that households prefer to use initial income gains for basic needs in the shorter term. For ACS-USAID, households were found to be more likely to invest both in the

*“Before [ACS-USAID] we could only buy clothes once a year. Not today. Today we see harvests more often and we can buy our children more clothes.” (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Female Beneficiary KII)*

*“My daughter graduated as a bachelor and she owed L. 38,000.00 to the university and she practically paid that with [cattle from ACS-USAID]...” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Men Agricultural Production FGD)*

<sup>32</sup> The evaluation team’s initial analysis plan included using a household asset index as one of the outcome variables for this analysis. However, the household survey data provided to the evaluation team did not contain household asset information in the result years and the only available information at the household level was not sufficient for creating a robust household asset index. Per discussion with USAID, analysis to examine correlations between program exposure and household asset index was dropped in the absence of feasible data to work with in the datasets provided to the evaluation team.

<sup>33</sup> The ACCESS to Markets / ACS-USAID household survey asks households if they made any investments in the last year, the type of investments, and the amount of each investment. We use the total investment amount.

<sup>34</sup> The household survey asks households if they made any investments “on-farm” and “in the home”.

home and on farm. This may indicate that the activity has been successful in achieving desired increases in household working capital and productive investments.

**Across both of the FtF activity qualitative samples, respondents most commonly reported that beneficiaries used additional income generated by the activity to cover household expenses** (ACS-USAID: 12 of 24 FGDs held with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, and 6 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 12 of 23 FGDs held with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, and 3 of 29 village-level KIIs). The types of household expenses that were commonly mentioned included food, children's education, and medicine/health care costs.

Table 14: Heatmap<sup>35</sup> of Household Uses of Additional Income

|                                                                                       | FGDs      |                   | Village-level KIIs |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                                                                                       | ACS-USAID | ACCESS to Markets | ACS-USAID          | ACCESS to Markets |
| Household expenses (e.g., food, children's education, health care)                    | 12        | 12                | 6                  | 3                 |
| Business-related investments (e.g., materials, transportation, building improvements) | 8         | 7                 | 0                  | 2                 |
| Productive investments (e.g., animals, transportation, ag. inputs)                    | 8         | 13                | 0                  | 1                 |
| Home improvements                                                                     | 5         | 3                 | 3                  | 2                 |
| Household savings                                                                     | 8         | 8                 | 0                  | 0                 |
| <b>FGD/KII totals</b>                                                                 | <b>24</b> | <b>23</b>         | <b>27</b>          | <b>29</b>         |

|                        |
|------------------------|
| Strong evidence ≥ 50%  |
| Medium evidence 25-49% |
| Weak evidence <25%     |

**Respondents noted that after paying for various household expenses, beneficiaries invested leftover income in their businesses, farms, and homes.** In eight of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, respondents reported that beneficiaries made business-related investments in materials, transportation, and building improvements. In eight of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, respondents reported that beneficiaries made productive investments such as buying animals, transportation, fertilizer, seeds, and other agricultural inputs. In five of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and three of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents reported that beneficiaries made home improvements such as expanding their homes and conducting home maintenance. In seven of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and two village-level KIIs, respondents reported that beneficiaries made business-related investments in equipment and increased their production of processed goods. In 13 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and one of 29 village-level KIIs, respondents reported that beneficiaries made productive investments. Buying animals and investing in the health of those animals was the most mentioned farm investment, but respondents also mentioned farm investments such as increasing the amount of land under production and purchasing agricultural inputs (e.g., fertilizer). In three of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and two of 29 village-level KIIs, respondents reported that beneficiaries made home improvements with their additional income.

<sup>35</sup> Heatmaps in this report provide a visual representation of the proportion of FGDs and KIIs that had consensus on each of the issues listed, across the ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets qualitative samples. Darker blue boxes indicate more widespread support for a given issue listed, because at least 50 percent of the FGDs held had consensus on this issue (numbers represent the FGD counts). Gray boxes indicate issues or topics with weak support, because less than 25 percent of the FGDs held showed consensus on this.

**While use of additional income to mitigate household economic shocks was clear, respondents did not mention any instances of beneficiaries using additional income generated from the FtF activities to mitigate the effects of climate shocks.**

*“When I have extra money, I invest in material to keep producing.” (Intibucá, Women Processors/Value-added FGD)*

*“We have made many improvements in my home, we have cleared the farm and now we have transportation to move and be able to cut the coffee and transport it. This has helped us a lot to improve the living conditions, and our family, we have had a radical change... We have improved a lot in the quality of life.” (La Paz, Men Processors/Value Added FGD)*

**Respondents noted that beneficiaries are also saving more as a result of the FtF activities.** In eight of 24 FGDs held with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, respondents reported that beneficiaries now save income earned from ACS-USAID activities. In eight of 23 FGDs held with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, respondents reported that beneficiaries now save income earned from ACCESS to Markets activities.

*“Before the project, there was not enough to save. Now, thank God, working with the irrigation district, we have enough to be able to save a little and we [can] cover unexpected expenses.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Men Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD).*

*“[ACCESS to Markets] told us to save and talked a lot about saving, about the needs that are going to be or that there may be.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Women Processors/Value Added FGD)*

**Differences by Gender:** In the ACS-USAID sample, the majority of respondents who noted that beneficiaries made investments in their farms were male (6 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs with men; 2 FGDs with women), while the majority of those who noted investments in business were female (9 FGDs with women; 1 FGD with men). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, investments in home improvements were mentioned more by male respondents (2 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) than female respondents (1 FGD).

**Differences by Department:** In the ACS-USAID sample, investing additional income from ACS-USAID in farms was more commonly mentioned by respondents in La Paz (5 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) than in Lempira (2 FGDs) or Intibucá (2 FGDs). Investing additional income in businesses was more commonly mentioned by respondents in Intibucá (5 FGDs) than in La Paz (3 FGDs) or Lempira (2 FGDs). Using additional income to cover household costs was more commonly mentioned by respondents in Intibucá (6 FGDs, 8 village-level KIIs) and La Paz (7 FGDs) than in Lempira (3 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, investments in home improvements were only mentioned by respondents in Santa Bárbara (2 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) and Copán (1 FGD, 1 village-level KII).

## **5. To what extent does spending or investment decisions around production affect the poverty level of households?**

As shown in Table 13 above, we did find a correlation between exposure to the FtF activity and household productive investments. For both of the FtF activities, we also observe a significant association between FtF activity exposure and changes in per capita daily income and poverty status (Table 8). While this suggests there may be some elements of the activity that are indeed working to improve households' economic well-being, the data available does not enable analysis of the relationship between household investments and the pathways from activity to improved economic well-being in a way that would shed further light on whether changes to household investment decisions are feeding into a cycle that further improves households' economic well-being.

Below, we summarize supplemental qualitative findings with respect to broader challenges on production and market access experienced by beneficiary households. While the qualitative results for both ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets suggest several positive improvements to households' economic wellbeing as a result of their participation in the FtF activities, several ongoing challenges were also highlighted by FGD or village-level KII respondents. These were viewed as inhibiting more widespread achievement of intended poverty reduction objectives, thus provide some additional insights for this learning question. Respondents reported various challenges related to realizing USAID's intended outcomes of sustained movement out of poverty, asset growth, wealth formation, and economic development.

**Table 15: Heatmap of Household Ongoing Production and Market Access Challenges**

|                                                                      | FGDs      |                   | Village-level KIIs |                   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|                                                                      | ACS-USAID | ACCESS to Markets | ACS-USAID          | ACCESS to Markets |
| <b>Production Challenges</b>                                         |           |                   |                    |                   |
| Economic constraints (e.g., productive inputs, materials, equipment) | 17        | 16                | 14                 | 15                |
| Beneficiaries lack sufficient land                                   | 0         | 8                 | 0                  | 4                 |
| Beneficiary mindset                                                  | 6         | 4                 | 14                 | 16                |
| Competing priorities / lack of time                                  | 6         | 0                 | 4                  | 0                 |
| Beneficiaries need more support                                      | 0         | 3                 | 0                  | 6                 |
| Lack of water / water management                                     | 8         | 14                | 10                 | 9                 |
| Climate / excessive rain                                             | 4         | 7                 | 3                  | 10                |
| Pests / disease                                                      | 3         | 9                 | 5                  | 5                 |
| <b>Market Access Challenges</b>                                      |           |                   |                    |                   |
| Lack of vehicles / transportation                                    | 7         | 8                 | 7                  | 2                 |
| Poor quality of roads                                                | 4         | 6                 | 2                  | 4                 |
| Difficulty meeting volume demands of market partners                 | 12        | 4                 | 13                 | 6                 |
| Formal registration / legalization                                   | 6         | 3                 | 3                  | 4                 |
| Difficulty meeting quality standards of market partners              | 4         | 6                 | 6                  | 4                 |
| Beneficiaries continue to sell to intermediaries                     | 7         | 14                | 3                  | 7                 |
| <b>FGD/KII totals</b>                                                | <b>24</b> | <b>23</b>         | <b>27</b>          | <b>29</b>         |

|               |
|---------------|
| Strong ≥ 50%  |
| Medium 25-49% |
| Weak <25%     |

### **Production Challenges for FtF Activity Beneficiaries**

**Respondents identified a set of ongoing economic constraints as the major challenge to achieving increased production and related economic benefits.** In 17 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 14 of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents mentioned high costs of productive inputs as a key barrier to stronger gains from income-generating activities promoted by ACS-USAID. Similarly, in 16 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 15 of 29 village-level KIIs, and three of eight department-level KIIs,

respondents highlighted high costs of productive inputs as a key barrier, including fertilizer, seeds, equipment, and insecticides. Cost-prohibitive farming inputs that were most commonly mentioned included fertilizer, seeds, equipment, and insecticides. Though most of the costs mentioned referred to farming inputs, processors also mentioned difficulty sourcing materials and equipment.

*“We do not have access to the economic [part], the money. Sometimes we have the land to cultivate, but if we don’t have access to the fertilizer, to the seed, then even if we want to, we can’t.”* (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Men Agricultural Production FGD).

*“Imagine, [the price of] sugar sometimes rises, every day; sometimes the sugar is more expensive, and we have to buy some to make those products, the more product you make, the more you spend.”* (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Women Processors/Value Added FGD)

*“The difficulty for the farmers is the financial resources because a plant requires a lot of assistance; compare a child from a family that has a lot of money to one that does not have resources, you can see the difference and so are the plants too, right. Poorly fed, poorly prepared, lack of water, lack of vitamins...I believe financial resources are important for cultivation.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Men Agricultural Production FGD)

*“Applying a pesticide, you know that the products we use to control that stuff are expensive.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Male Beneficiary KII)

*“There’s another thing that’s needed in the organized groups of irrigation systems: obtaining improved seed at low prices, inputs at a low price also. Sometimes we have to buy very expensive supplies because there are businesses that live from that and they don’t mind increasing the price and obtaining good profits, but we get the expenses duplicated and sometimes that affects us. In the end, we invest more in inputs than the production we get.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Men Processors/Value Added FGD)

Department-level KIIs also reported economic constraints as a barrier to achieving poverty reduction objectives, noting that producers and processors often continue to lack the starting capital required to purchase inputs and manage other costs needed for market-based production (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 2 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners). In department-level KIIs for ACCESS to Markets, respondents also highlighted how difficult it was for beneficiaries to access credit, both because of a lack of collateral to secure loans and their own fears of risk.

**In the ACCESS to Markets sample, some respondents also specifically noted that they did not have sufficient land on which to implement new farming practices learned through ACCESS to Markets. Land constraints were not strongly mentioned in the ACS-USAID sample.** In eight of 23 ACCESS to Markets FGDs and four of 29 village-level KIIs, respondents noted land constraints, including not owning the land on which they worked, insufficient land to expand to new crops or techniques on their own plots, and not being able to purchase new land.

*“Well, in my case, I’m going to tell you the only difficulty I have is that I don’t have land to work. If I had land to work, I would sow anything, but land is very expensive here.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Men Agricultural Production FGD)

**Respondents reported that resistance to change among some beneficiaries was an initial hurdle.** Respondents mentioned the mindset of beneficiaries as an initial hurdle to implementation of particular activities or production practices promoted by the FtF activities (ACS-USAID: 6 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 14 of 27 village-level KIIs; 4 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and 16 of 29 village-level KIIs). The common reasons given were that beneficiaries mistrusted that the new techniques would work, were not interested in changing their traditional planting practices, and were afraid of losing money by making new investments. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in five of eight department-level KIIs

noted various instances of beneficiaries resisting change, including their disinterest in diversification and new production methods. However, several respondents reported that after seeing benefits of the improved practices, other beneficiaries eventually came onboard.

*“There is not enough money and people are afraid to invest and lose everything. If I sow and do not have [money] for the pesticide, I could lose everything.” (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Male Beneficiary KII)*

Department-level respondents reported that beneficiaries’ resistance to change was the primary barrier to achieving gains on production objectives. According to respondents, producers were resistant to new planting techniques, particularly spacing techniques, soil treatment techniques, and crop diversification (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 3 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners, and 2 of 3 KIIs with financial service partners). In two KIIs (1 with ACS-USAID staff, 1 with value chain partners), respondents reported that this resistance may be attributed to beneficiaries’ age and education levels. They noted that younger beneficiaries are more open to new technologies and planting techniques.

**Respondents reported that competing priorities among some beneficiaries led to them not following technician recommendations closely.** In six of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and four of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents indicated that beneficiaries did not have enough time to devote to ACS-USAID activities. Migration during the coffee harvest, in which their plots were neglected, was the most commonly mentioned reason. Other respondents noted the need to focus on other activities, such as more immediate income-generating work and child care.

*“We have hardly put [ACS-USAID techniques] into practice...Because sometimes, more men go [away] to work. They [are the ones who] prepare the plot, so sometimes they don’t put [the techniques] into practice and when they go to work far away, well we are left alone with the kids. And sometimes as a women we don’t have time to go out to work like that, since we take charge of child care. Well, and it’s worse in my case because I have little children.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Women Processors/Value Added FGD)*

**Some ACCESS to Markets respondents noted that beneficiaries needed additional support from ACCESS to Markets technicians.** In three of 23 FGDs and six of 29 village-level KIIs, respondents noted that beneficiaries’ ability to implement knowledge gained from technicians was limited. Beneficiaries requested more follow up and in-depth practical training. In three of eight department-level KIIs for the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents also identified low technical skill amongst producers.

*“I think a quick technical assistance can work with people who are trained, like an agricultural technician or an agronomic engineer. They can talk to me about what I’m doing in half hour, in an hour in the morning, I can understand if you make a demonstration. But the educational level of Honduras makes it impossible, because people don’t read, you know the levels they have in Spanish and they don’t even understand math...I can say I will assign two technicians for 300 producers, each technician will be with 150 producers, if two technicians visit 250 producers and there are about one thousand producers in Santa Bárbara, you can’t fix the problem in Santa Bárbara with five technicians, that’s a lie. It’s impossible for the producer to get a talk, maybe he’ll get a paper [with instructions] and he’ll try to do something, but that won’t work.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Male Other Value Chain Partner KII)*

*“I wanted to implement [training] but it is a thorough thing, it does not mean that you can give a summary. I think we need to get more into the subject to see what things we are going to improve and need them to follow up on the rest, because, as I repeat, they have given us good teachings, how to plant the grass, some have learned it because [now] they are reaping fruits. What is like planting vegetables and all that, how to have good income, sow less to harvest more, invest less so that the income is more, but in my part I have not done it ... we need a lot of follow-up to that because it also includes [knowledge on] the economics, what is the transport [required] to get this product to the market, where to sell our product, etc. When we are talking about USAID, we need to be there, to get involved more.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Men Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)*

*“For a person who may be educated on issues off agriculture, the technical assistance package may be easy to follow. But for those who are always in the farms, and have lower levels of education, it is harder. They have less technical knowledge in this regard.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male Department-level KII)*

In one FGD, a respondent noted that technicians had not visited his plot:

*“Until now, they have never been to my plot, I have to be honest... Why will I say they have gone if they haven’t? They haven’t gone because they had another area of concern.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Men Processors/Value Added FGD)*

**Across both of the FtF activities, respondents highlighted a lack of water and other environmental challenges as key constraints for productivity and product quality improvements.**<sup>36</sup> In eight of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and ten of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents mentioned production challenges related to low water availability. Though irrigation systems were established or improved in many ACS-USAID communities, there are still ongoing concerns about water management and availability. In four of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and three of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents noted drought and excessive rain still hindered production efforts. In three of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and five of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents noted ongoing challenges with agricultural pests and diseases, especially rust on coffee crops. In 14 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, nine of 29 village-level KIIs, and one of eight department-level KIIs, respondents mentioned production challenges related to water management or low water availability. In seven of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, ten of 29 village-level KIIs, and two of eight department-level KIIs, respondents noted drought, excessive rain, and other climate shocks still hindered production efforts. In nine of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, five of 29 village-level KIIs, and one of eight department-level KIIs, respondents noted ongoing challenges with agricultural pests and diseases, including rust on coffee crops.

**Differences by Gender:** In the ACS-USAID sample, more male KII respondents reported resistance to change among beneficiaries as a key production challenge (11 male village-level KIIs; 4 female village-level KIIs). Challenges related to water availability were mentioned more often by male respondents (7 FGDs, 7 village-level KIIs) than female (1 FGD, 4 village-level KIIs). Across the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents who indicated that beneficiaries needed more in-depth training and attention from technicians were predominately male (3 FGDs, 5 village-level KIIs with men; 1 village-level KII with woman). Production challenges related to water were also mentioned more often by male respondents (9 FGDs, 8 KIIs) than female respondents (5 FGDs, 1 village-level KII). Climate shocks were mentioned by more male respondents (5 FGDs, 9 village-level KIIs) than female respondents (2 FGDs, 1 village-level KII).

**Differences by Department:** For the ACS-USAID sample, resistance to change among beneficiaries was noted most often by respondents in Lempira (2 FGDs, 8 village-level KIIs), followed by those in Intibucá (3 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs) and La Paz (1 FGD, 2 village-level KIIs). Lack of time was cited most often by respondents in Lempira (3 FGDs, 3 KIIs), compared to Intibucá (2 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) and La Paz (1 FGD). All but one of the eight mentions of pests/diseases as an implementation challenge came from Intibucá (3 of 3 FGDs, 4 of 5 village-level KIIs). For the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in Copán (2 FGDs, 8 village-level KIIs) more commonly reported resistance to change among beneficiaries, compared to those in Santa Bárbara (1 FGD, 4 village-level KIIs) and Ocotepeque (1 FGD, 4 village-level KIIs). Climate challenges to production were mentioned by more respondents in Santa Bárbara (3 FGDs, 7 village-level KIIs) than in Copán (2 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) or Ocotepeque (2 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs).

### **Market Access Challenges for FtF Activity Beneficiaries**

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<sup>36</sup> Also see discussion on this under Learning Themes 5 and 6.

**Across both qualitative samples, respondents commonly reported transportation-related problems as a key barrier to accessing markets.** Respondents highlighted various transportation challenges that they saw as preventing their ability to sell products at market or lowering the prices they received (ACS-USAID: In 10 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 10 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 11 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and 6 of 29 village-level KIIs). Respondents commonly pointed to lack of vehicles or animals to transport goods (ACS-USAID: 7 FGDs, 7 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 8 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) and the poor quality of roads between farms and markets (ACS-USAID: 4 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 6 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs).

*“We take it [the product] to Tegucigalpa. That product when it arrives there [it] does not look pretty anymore. It is cooked, it is ugly because of the bruises [while] carried on the animal during the road. While if [instead] a car were to load [it at] the plot, it would be different. That product would arrive there in less time and it would arrive better, fresher and less mistreated.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Men Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)

Department-level respondents specifically noted the lack of collection centers when discussing logistical challenges (2 of 8 KIIs). As one male Agriculture/Value Chain Partner mentioned, *“Collecting and transporting coffee from 300+ producers is not easy.”*

**There is evidence that the FtF activities have connected more producers to markets, however some respondents still report various barriers to entry.** Respondents noted that beneficiaries have difficulty meeting the volume demands of market partners such as the World Food Program, supermarkets, and other buyers (ACS-USAID: 12 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 13 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 4 of 24 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 6 of 29 village-level KIIs, and 1 of 8 department-level KIIs). Respondents also noted challenges with formal registration, permits/licenses, taxes, legalization, and other regulatory processes required prior to selling goods to market partners (ACS-USAID: 6 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 3 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 3 of 24 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 4 of 27 village-level KIIs, and 2 of 8 department-level KIIs). Despite improvements in product quality they have achieved through the FtF activity support, meeting higher quality standards was also still a challenge. In four of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and six of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents noted beneficiary difficulties meeting these standards because of associated expenses, lack of water, or not understanding the requirements. In six of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, four of 29 village-level KIIs, and three of eight department-level KIIs, respondents noted beneficiary difficulties meeting these standards. Some beneficiaries did not understand why their products were rejected. Stakeholder KIIs noted that the standards are not easy for producers to meet.

*“There is a difference that markets ask for great standards of production in hundredweight. For example, they ask for blocks. ‘I need 400 hundredweights for such date and 400 hundredweights for another date.’ So the production and yield with the times we are living in, [do not allow us] to meet that demand, so that is the first obstacle why we as producers cannot compete in the market.”* (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Male Beneficiary KII)

*“The problem is that we don’t know what characteristics the product must have to bring it to the market. Because for example I know that if I want to take it to a supermarket, things must meet certain requirements that we don’t have, and then we are disappointed because we can’t sell.”* (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Men Agricultural Production FGD)

*“What has been difficult with the producer is the series of requirements they ask for. The other thing is with these new SAR laws, true, where they ask for billing and this type of regulations that scare the producer. [To tell the truth], not all [can] meet [this]. Then, that of codes. With Walmart, [you] have to make a code, have to pay the baskets, have to take fresh produce, meet the goals.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Male Financial Services KII)

**Respondents noted that as a result, beneficiaries often continue to sell their products to intermediaries, thus lowering their potential profits.** In six of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents noted that ACS-USAID helped to establish market prices and educate producers on prices they should receive for their products. However, in seven of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and three of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents noted that beneficiaries are still selling to “coyotes” and intermediaries who resell these product for their own profit<sup>37</sup>. As one respondent noted: “We sell to the same coyote when we don’t have a secure market” (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Men Agricultural Production FGD). This issue was more strongly cited in the ACCESS to Markets sample. In 14 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and seven of 29 village-level KIIs, respondents noted that beneficiaries are still selling to “coyotes” and intermediaries who resell these product for their own profit. Various reasons were given for working with coyotes, including needing money quickly and the fact that many producers receive their agricultural inputs on loan from coyotes and must sell them the produce to pay down their debts. Some respondents note that grocery stores use coyotes as suppliers.

*“To us, when the production is already there, since there’s no market in which we see the buyers, a direct market with the producer, we have had to sell to the coyote and the coyote puts his price, if we want it or not, then that’s the thing, since we don’t want to lose what we do is sell them. I’d like getting a market through USAID for the producer, to be helped so we don’t lose our crops, not losing what we invested, having a little bit of progress.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Men Processors/Value-Added FGD)

*“The intermediary keeps all the profit, the producer only keeps the expenses because he has to resell as the market is. So, the one who wins here is the intermediary and we here, well, we are full of intermediaries and nobody has the benefit of that production, but the intermediary.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Women Agricultural Production FGD)

*Moderator: Now that you improve the quality of the peppers, do they pay the same?*

*M1: The same.*

*M3: The same. They pay the same price.*

(ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Men Agricultural Production FGD)



*Onions grown by beneficiary*

Department-level KIIs also observed that intermediaries remain a challenge for activity beneficiaries. Informants report there are instances in which producers may be forced to sell to intermediaries due to the inability to transport materials, and the flexible buying terms coyotes offer (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 1 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners, and 1 of 3 KIIs with financial service partners).

**Differences by Gender:** In the ACS-USAID sample, poor road quality was reported as a challenge to market access more frequently by male respondents (3 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) than female (1 FGD). Formal barriers to entry were reported more frequently by female respondents (5 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) than male (2 FGD, 1 village-level KII). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, difficulties meeting volume demands were reported more often by men (3 FGDs, 5 village-level KIIs) than women (1 FGD, 1 village-level KII). Nearly all references to challenges meeting quality requirements came from men (5 FGDs, 1 village-level KII with men; 1 village-level KII with woman).

**Differences by Department:** In the ACS-USAID sample, Intibucá respondents only reported transportation problems related to the lack of vehicles, and no issues with road quality. Poor road quality was noted in both La Paz (3 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) and Lempira (1 FGD, 1 village-level KII). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, lack of vehicles to transport products was reported as a constraint for accessing markets more frequently by

<sup>37</sup> Implementing partners note intermediaries include collection centers in addition to individuals, and that the project aimed to improve the professionalism of these operations where possible.

respondents in Ocotepeque (4 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) than Santa Bárbara (2 FGDs) and Copán (2 FGDs). Registration/formalization challenges were only reported in Santa Bárbara (2 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) and Copán (1 FGD, 2 village-level KIIs). The use of intermediaries or coyotes was mentioned more in Ocotepeque (5 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) and Copán (6 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs) than in Santa Bárbara (3 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs).

### Learning Theme 2 Conclusions

- Econometric analysis under this learning theme finds evidence that the activities increased working capital for beneficiary households and that households are more likely to invest in the home (for both activities) and also on the farm (for ACS-USAID).
- Qualitative results provide support for income gains for beneficiary households as a result of the FtF activities. Respondents indicate this income is primarily used to meet household expenses and mitigate economic shocks.
- The evaluation does not find evidence that households use additional income gained explicitly to manage climatic shocks.

## 5.3 LEARNING THEME 3: GENDER

The learning questions under Learning Theme 3 are answered through the household survey and qualitative data, which include substantial coverage on women's empowerment and gender issues. This includes insights into women's decision-making about agricultural production and productive resources, including access and control of resources, together with coverage on each of the five domains that comprise USAID's Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI): Agricultural production, decision-making on productive resources, income, leadership, and time. In keeping with the emphasis of the activity gender strategies as communicated by IPs, the reporting focuses on changes to joint decision-making in the household rather than sole decision-making by women. However, we also highlight information on sole decision-making by women where it is available in the data.

### Key Findings for Learning Theme 3

- **Econometric analysis suggests that as program exposure increased, women in participating households were less likely to participate in joint decision-making on agricultural production and more likely to participate in joint decision-making on livestock production.**
  - For ACCESS to Markets, an additional year of program exposure is associated with a 14.5 percent decrease in the probability that women will participate in agricultural decisions jointly, and a 6.6 increase in the probability of that women will participate in livestock-related decisions.
  - For ACS-USAID, an additional year of program exposure is associated with a 4.1 percent decrease in the probability that women will participate in agricultural decisions jointly, and a 13.2 percent increase in the probability of that women will participate in livestock-related decisions.
- **Whether the direct client in the household is female or male has no effect on either the poverty status or per capita daily income of the household for ACCESS to Markets. However, for ACS-USAID, households where the direct client was a male were more likely to be above the poverty line or have a higher per-capita income.**

### Qualitative Findings for Learning Theme 3

- **Despite these econometric results, there is qualitative evidence that women's involvement in productive activities, asset ownership, and community leadership increased.** Despite persisting challenges around gendered social norms, qualitative data from both samples indicates that FtF has led to significant improvements for women on these issues. ACCESS to Markets respondents also indicated some success in educating men about being more inclusive of women in decision-making.
- **Respondents very commonly noted that FtF activities increased joint decision-making in production.** This was noted in 75 or nearly 90 percent of FGDs held for ACS-USAID or ACCESS, respectively. Respondents reported that activities were instrumental, noting that technical assistance and trainings played a key role in improving women's knowledge of agricultural practices, and encouraging men to include women.

- **Though men continue to own most household productive assets, some respondents noted an increase in joint ownership.** Joint asset ownership was reported in half of ACS-USAID FGDs and 30 percent of ACCESS FGDs. Joint decision-making regarding assets was reported to be at similar levels (half of ACS-USAID FGDs, 65 percent of ACCESS FGDs).
- **Respondents very commonly reported joint decision-making on financial decisions.** This was reported in more than 90 percent of ACS-USAID FGDs and nearly 80 percent of ACCESS FGDs. In both samples, respondents noted it was not uncommon for women to manage all household finances and spending decisions. Though women in the ACS-USAID sample reported involvement in financial decisions before the activity, some noted feeling more confident and that their spouses trusted them more.
- **Respondents noted changes in women's community leadership and decision-making.** This was reported in 60 percent of the ACS-USAID FGD sample, and nearly half of the ACCESS to Markets FGD sample. Respondents said the activities had created more inclusive environments for women's participation in institutions such as water management boards, cooperatives, and other community groups.
- **Few women reported increases in their personal time as a result of FtF activities.** In 13 percent of ACS-USAID FGDs and 17 percent of ACCESS FGDs, women highlighted increases in their personal time brought about by FtF's labor-saving practices and equipment.
- **Perceptions on key barriers to women's empowerment were similar across activity beneficiaries and key stakeholders.** Irrespective of respondent gender, key barriers were noted as: machismo, women's lack of agricultural/production knowledge, and women's household responsibilities.
- **Men and women reported different barriers to women's decision making.** Men were more likely to report that women's limited involvement in production decisions was due to their lack of interest, while women noted their household responsibilities. With respect to assets, men reported no barriers to women's asset ownership, while women reported they were constrained by their limited or non-existent incomes.
- **Within each FtF activity, there is limited evidence for differential effects by department.** For ACS-USAID, qualitative data suggests stronger gains on joint decision-making over production in La Paz and Intibucá than in Lempira. For ACCESS to Markets, there were no notable differences by department with respect to women's decision-making on agricultural production. Both samples had few notable differences by department with respect to productive assets, household spending, women's leadership issues, and women's leisure time.

## 6. To what extent have FtF interventions impacted women's empowerment in agriculture?

To examine whether exposure (intensity) to the activities is associated with changes in women's empowerment in agriculture, we re-estimate equation (1) with the following two variables as dependent variables in separate regressions, while using exposure to the activity and household baseline characteristics as explanatory variables in each regression:

- (1) Whether women can participate in decision-making on crops, either jointly or alone (i.e., what crop to plant, when to sow, what inputs to apply, when and where to sell, and whether to take them together or individually);
- (2) Whether women can participate in decision-making on what animal to raise, either jointly or alone (i.e., what to raise, how to feed and care, when and where to sell, and whether to take them together or individually).

With more exposure to ACCESS for Markets, women in these households are less likely to participate in decision-making on crops, either jointly or alone, as shown in Table 16, and the result is highly statistically significant at the 1 percent level. An additional year of exposure is associated with a decrease of 0.72 in the log odds of women participating in joint decision-making regarding crops. This translates into a 14.5 percent decrease in the probability that women will participate in joint decision-making. However, the opposite was observed for decision making regarding livestock. An additional year of exposure was associated with an increase of 0.33 in the log odds of women participating in joint decision making regarding livestock, corresponding to a 6.6 percent increase in the probability that women will participate in joint decision-making on this. This result was also highly statistically significant.

We observe a similar pattern for households exposed to ACS-USAID. With more exposure to the activity, women are less likely to participate in joint decision-making over crops (by 4.1 percent) and more likely to participate in joint decision-making with regards to livestock (by 13.2 percent). Both associations are highly statistically significant.

These results should be interpreted with caution. Unlike with other outcome variables such as household income or asset that are objective, the outcomes analyzed above are subjective and are likely to have response bias depending on the gender of the respondent. Note that only about 14 percent of the clients in the ACCESS to Markets sample and about 19 percent of the clients for the ACS-USAID sample are females. The results above could simply indicate that men, the larger proportion of the clients, have a tendency to state that they make decisions regarding crops by themselves than to state that they make decision on livestock by themselves.<sup>38</sup> The qualitative analysis is particularly important in this regard to understand this type of cultural dynamics that may bias survey responses.

**Table 16: Correlations between Program Exposure and Women's Empowerment**

|                                     | ACCESS to Markets                             |                                                   | ACS-USAID                                     |                                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|                                     | Women participate in decision making on crops | Women participate in decision making on livestock | Women participate in decision making on crops | Women participate in decision making on livestock |
|                                     | (1)                                           | (2)                                               | (3)                                           | (4)                                               |
| Length of exposure                  | -0.72***                                      | 0.33***                                           | -0.18***                                      | 0.69***                                           |
|                                     | (0.06)                                        | (0.05)                                            | (0.05)                                        | (0.06)                                            |
| Baseline background characteristics | Yes                                           | Yes                                               | Yes                                           | Yes                                               |
| Cohort fixed effects                | Yes                                           | Yes                                               | Yes                                           | Yes                                               |
| Department fixed effects            | Yes                                           | Yes                                               | Yes                                           | Yes                                               |
| Model                               | Logistic                                      | Logistic                                          | Logistic                                      | Logistic                                          |
| Sample size                         | 2,903                                         | 2,903                                             | 2,621                                         | 2,621                                             |
| R-squared                           | 0.08                                          | 0.07                                              | 0.04                                          | 0.13                                              |

Note: \*\*\*/\*\*/\* Statistically significant at the 0.01/0.05/0.1 level.

**Analysis of the qualitative data** suggests that despite persisting challenges around gendered social norms, project activities have resulted in significant gains for women in ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Market households with respect to decision-making around agricultural production, productive assets, and resources. Further, women's involvement in leadership positions in the community is also reported to have increased. There is also some evidence that ACCESS to Markets activities have been successful in educating men about being more inclusive of women in decision-making around production, asset sales, and household spending.

**Table 17** below summarizes key trends on decision-making across the five WEAI categories as perceived by the FGD and village-level KII participants. The qualitative evidence for positive changes in joint decision-making is strongest for agricultural production, household financial decisions, and women's involvement in community leadership and decision-making. While the data suggest that project activities facilitated increased asset

<sup>38</sup> In the ACCESS to Markets sample, 33 percent of the households with male clients reported women participate in decision-making about crops and 66 percent reported women participate in decision-making about livestock. The corresponding numbers for households with female clients are 34 percent and 69 percent. In the ACS-USAID sample, 46 percent of the households with male clients reported women participate in decision-making about crops and 66 percent reported women participate in decision-making about livestock. The corresponding numbers for households with female clients are 43 percent and 64 percent. These descriptive differences are minimal. The sample size of households with female clients is not large enough to conduct a multivariate analysis by gender.

ownership among women, there is less evidence or a change toward increased joint decision-making processes around productive assets. In addition, the evidence for increased leisure or personal time for women as a result of the FtF activities is weak. Overall, the qualitative findings suggest that both of the FtF activities achieved gains on women's empowerment issues through their gender strategies.

**Table 17: Heatmap of Women's Empowerment and Gender Issues**

|                                                                          | FGDs      |           | Village-level KIIs |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|
|                                                                          | ACS-USAID | ACCESS    | ACS-USAID          | ACCESS    |
| <b>Agricultural Production</b>                                           |           |           |                    |           |
| Increase in joint decision-making                                        | 18        | 20        | 3                  | 0         |
| Women make decisions alone                                               | 5         | 4         | 3                  | 0         |
| Men make decisions alone                                                 | 14        | 12        | 1                  | 0         |
| <b>Productive Resources / Assets</b>                                     |           |           |                    |           |
| Joint ownership of productive assets                                     | 12        | 7         | 0                  | 0         |
| Women own productive assets alone                                        | 12        | 9         | 0                  | 0         |
| Men own productive assets alone                                          | 15        | 18        | 0                  | 0         |
| Decisions are made jointly                                               | 11        | 15        | 0                  | 0         |
| Women make decisions alone                                               | 3         | 0         | 0                  | 0         |
| Men make decisions alone                                                 | 6         | 12        | 0                  | 0         |
| <b>Household Income / Spending</b>                                       |           |           |                    |           |
| Decisions are made jointly                                               | 22        | 18        | 10                 | 0         |
| Women make decisions alone                                               | 0         | 9         | 0                  | 0         |
| Men make decisions alone                                                 | 5         | 4         | 3                  | 0         |
| <b>Community Leadership</b>                                              |           |           |                    |           |
| Positive changes in women's community leadership and decision-making     | 15        | 11        | 10                 | 9         |
| <b>Time</b>                                                              |           |           |                    |           |
| Increase in personal time                                                | 3         | 4         | 0                  | 0         |
| <b>FGD/KII totals</b>                                                    | <b>24</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>27</b>          | <b>29</b> |
| <div>Strong ≥ 50%</div> <div>Medium 25-49%</div> <div>Weak &lt;25%</div> |           |           |                    |           |

## WEAI I – Agricultural Production

**Respondents commonly reported an increase in joint decision-making around agricultural production**

(ACS-USAID: 18 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 7 FGDs were with women; 3 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 20 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, of which 10 FGDs were with women). In these instances, respondents also reported they were working together as couples more often, and reported that project activities were instrumental to facilitating joint decision-making. Technical assistance and trainings on women's empowerment played a key role in improving women's knowledge of agricultural practices, and encouraged men to incorporate women (8 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, of which 4 FGDs were with women; 14 of 29 village-level KIIs).

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*“Women have rights as men do...I have no limitations. We have changed now because there is more production with the techniques that have been given to us. We both work, couples work together.”*  
(ACS-USAID, La Paz, Women Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)

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Women respondents also reported that they made decisions on agricultural production alone (ACS-USAID: 5 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, 3 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 4 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries). The majority of these respondents indicated that they were not partnered, or their partner did not live with them, while respondents in one FGD reported making production decisions alone without consulting their spouse.

Despite improvements, FGDs held with men and women alike reported that some men still make production decisions alone (ACS-USAID: 14 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 7 FGDs were with women; 1 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 12 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, of which 8 FGDs were with women). Respondents cited various reasons for this dynamic, including women lacking the knowledge to make agricultural decisions, and women having other obligations in the household. Women respondents also reported that they felt that men were more knowledgeable, and therefore better suited to make such decisions (6 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries). Chauvinism was commonly mentioned as a key barrier to women's decision-making in production (ACS-USAID: 10 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 5 FGDs were with women; 8 of 27 village-level KIIs ACCESS to Markets: 6 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, of which 4 FGDs were with women, 6 village-level KIIs).

Women also reported instances in which they did try to get more involved, but were met with resistance from their partners:

*“I am struggling with my husband, because I am telling him not to plant corn because it doesn't produce anything. It's been two years of drought where the corn does not produce. I tell him we [need to] make a bigger farm, but he doesn't listen.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Women Processors/Value Added FGD)

Respondents also cited other barriers to women's production decision-making. Village level KIIs report that between household responsibilities and childcare, women do not have enough time to be involved in production activities (2 of 17 village-level KIIs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries). Respondents also indicated that since the majority of agricultural technical assistance goes to men, women do not have as much knowledge of agricultural production activities, and are therefore unable to make production decisions (4 of 17 village-level KIIs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries).

Department-level KIIs report that the project has enabled women to participate much more in agricultural production activities (ACS-USAID: 3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 2 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners, 2 of 3 KIIs with financial service partners; ACCESS to Markets: 3 of 3 KIIs with ACCESS to Markets staff, 2 of 2 KIIs with financial service partners, 2 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners). These informants report that women are much more involved in different aspects of agricultural production activities, including harvesting, planting, and managing irrigation systems. ACCESS to Markets informants also indicated that not only are women getting

more involved, they are also taking leadership within cooperatives, and in many cases achieving higher rates of loan repayment (2 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners, 1 of 2 KIIs with financial service partners). Across both FtF activities, stakeholder informants acknowledged that machismo remains a challenge for fully including women in production activities (ACS-USAID: 3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 1 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners, 1 of 3 KIIs with financial service partners). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, informants highlighted some of the measures they had taken to help address barriers to women's production decision making. For example, ACCESS to Markets staff reported encouraging men to bring their spouses to trainings (2 of 3 KIIs) while value chain partners report championing women's cooperatives (2 of 3 KIIs).

**Differences by Gender:** There were variances in the way men and women reported production decision-making, and these patterns were similar across both FtF activities. While there were no differences between men and women making joint production decisions, only women reported that women make production decisions alone in the ACS-USAID sample, and in the ACCESS to Markets sample women more often reported that they made production decisions alone (8 FGDs with women, compared with 5 FGDs with men). There were also marked differences by gender in reporting barriers to women's decision-making. While both men and women reported that agricultural knowledge and chauvinism were factors, men were more likely to report that women's limited involvement in production decisions was due to a lack of interest (3 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, all of which were with men, 1 village-level KII; 3 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries). Conversely, women were more likely to report that their household responsibilities were a barrier to their involvement in production decisions (6 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, all of which were with women). Only men reported that there were no barriers to women's decision-making (2 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries). Women reported that between household responsibilities and childcare, there was no time to be involved in agricultural decisions, and no flexibility to take their children to the field.

**Differences by Department:** For the ACS-USAID sample, respondents in La Paz and Intibucá more often reported that production decisions were made jointly (9 FGDs in La Paz, 7 FGDs in Intibucá). Only 2 FGDs in Lempira reported that production decisions were made jointly. Additionally, respondents in Lempira more often reported that men made production decisions alone (8 FGDs in Lempira, 1 village-level KII in Lempira compared with 3 FGDs in Intibucá and 5 FGDs in La Paz). There were no notable differences by department for the ACCESS to Markets sample.

## **WEAI 2 – Decision-Making on Productive Resources/Assets**

***Project activities facilitated increased asset ownership among women, but did not change joint decision-making processes around productive assets.*** Respondents reported that in most cases, men owned productive assets such as land, equipment, and infrastructure (ACS-USAID: 15 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, 9 of which were with women; ACCESS to Markets: 18 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 9 of which were with women). Men and women both reported that men's asset ownership was largely due to patrilineal systems of inheritance (6 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 3 of which were with women). In the ACS-USAID sample, respondents indicated that men inherited land, and the deeds to the land only contained their names.

However, there were also instances in which respondents reported owning assets jointly (ACS-USAID: 12 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 5 FGDs were with women; ACCESS to Markets: 7 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, of which 4 were with women) or that women owned productive assets alone (ACS-USAID: 12 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 10 FGDs were with women; ACCESS to Markets: 9 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 8 of which were with women). The majority of women who reported owning productive assets alone were single, and the most commonly mentioned asset was processing equipment. However, some partnered women reported that the introduction of project activities helped facilitate their asset ownership, as they now owned the tools, equipment, and

infrastructure required for processing and value-added activities. These women indicated that project activities made women more interested in pursuing asset ownership. One respondent noted that this has also allowed her to create employment opportunities for other women in the community.

*“Thanks to the impulse that USAID has given us to create this microenterprise, we are now giving employment or job vacancies (because we had a girl) to the community, and this really helps.” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Women Processors/Value-Added FGD)*

Although men most often owned productive assets, respondents reported that decision-making on productive assets was most often made jointly (11 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries; 15 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 6 of which were with women). Respondents in the ACCESS to Markets sample also commonly reported that men made decisions on productive assets alone (12 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 5 of which were with women). This was less commonly reported in the ACS-USAID sample (6 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 1 FGD was with women).

In the ACS-USAID sample, women producers, both partnered and single, sometimes noted that they made decisions around productive assets within their businesses alone, or with the other women in their processing groups (7 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries). However, only women who were not partnered reported making decisions on productive assets for their household on their own (3 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries). Women in the ACCESS to Markets sample did not report making decisions on productive assets alone. In most cases, women who owned productive assets reported making decisions with groups of other women (4 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries).

**Differences by Gender:** There were variances in the ways men and women reported barriers to women’s asset ownership. In the ACS-USAID sample, women more often reported they were the sole owners (12 FGDs with women) and decision-makers (7 FGDs with women) on productive assets. However, there were no differences around how men and women reported joint ownership and decision-making of productive assets. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, only men reported that there were no barriers to women’s asset ownership (6 of 23 FGDs), while women were more likely to report that limited or no income was the primary barrier to asset ownership (8 FGDs with women, compared with 2 FGDs with men). Notably, the men who reported income as a barrier to asset ownership also indicated that this was no different from men’s barriers to asset ownership. Women were also more likely to report that male chauvinism was a barrier to asset ownership (7 FGDs with women, compared with 1 FGD with men). Next, only women discussed how challenges in asset ownership also created challenges for credit access (11 FGDs). Women reported that since land, and other assets were in their husband’s names, working with formal financial institutions was difficult as they do not have guarantees to present as collateral.

**Differences by Department:** There were no notable differences between departments in the ACS-USAID sample. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, women in Santa Barbara less often reported productive asset ownership (2 FGDs in Santa Barbara, compared with 3 FGDs in Ocotepeque and 4 FGDs in Copán). Women in Santa Barbara also reported chauvinism as a barrier to asset ownership more than women in other departments (4 FGDs in Santa Barbara, compared with 1 FGD in Ocotepeque and 3 FGDs in Copán).

### **WEAI 3 – Income**

**Respondents across men’s and women’s FGDs most often reported that decisions on household income and spending were made jointly** (ACS-USAID: 22 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, 10 of 27 village-level KIs; ACCESS to Markets: 18 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 10 of which were with women). Respondents reported that in most cases, women managed all household finances, made decisions around expense allocation, and then discussed their plans with their partners to come to consensus. Respondents also reported that there were many instances in which men simply handed over their income (or a

portion thereof) to women, and left it to them to allocate for households needs without any input or discussion (9 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 7 FGDs were with women). Respondents in these groups reported this arrangement was more favorable because women have a better understanding of household needs and are better at managing finances and ensuring proper allocation of resources, while men may be likely to spend money on vices or waste resources. In one women's FGD, however, respondents discussed resenting this dynamic.

*"I make all the decisions in my house, including some referring to children. It's always me. They overload us. It's a burden that we have, we manage our home and they should help us. My husband says 'here is the allowance, make it last' and from there I have to plan."* (ACS-USAID La Paz, Women Processors/Value Added FGD)

Respondents were less likely to report that men made money and spending decisions alone (ACS-USAID: 5 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 3 FGDs were with men; 3 of 24 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 4 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, of which 2 were with women). In these instances, respondents reported that it was tradition for men to handle money (2 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, 1 village-level KII), or that machismo made men resistant to involving women in financial decision-making (ACS-USAID: 5 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 4 FGDs were with women, 2 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 9 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, all of which were with women; 2 of 29 village-level KIIs).

However, some respondents in the ACCESS to Markets sample also reported that project activities have helped to address this chauvinism, and made spending decisions more inclusive of women (3 of 23 FGDs, of which 1 was with women). Men reported that the training they received helped them understand the importance of collaborating with their spouses:

*"The preparation [and] the education they give you in the institutions is so there is unity, more trust in the family and with the wife. Sometimes we make mistakes at home but it is due to ignorance. Male chauvinism leads to failure but in our case, since we were organized, we had education. That helped us, we had a unity in the family [and] appreciate everything we have at home."* (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Men Producers FGD)

**Differences by Gender:** In the ACS-USAID sample, women reported that although they were largely involved in household financial decisions before ACS-USAID began, in some cases they now felt more confident in their decision-making, and sensed that their spouses trusted them more with financial decisions (3 of 24 FGDs, 3 village-level KIIs). Women attributed these changes to the income-generating activities they had taken on with ACS-USAID support, and now having their own income to bring to the table. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, women more often reported chauvinism as a barrier to household and spending decisions (9 FGDs with women, compared with 0 FGDs with men). Women also cited other barriers to money and spending decision-making, including lack of income, and communication issues (8 FGDs), while men more often reported that there were no barriers to women's money decision-making (4 FGDs with men, compared with 1 FGD with women).

**Differences by Department:** In the ACS-USAID sample, while five FGDs in Intibucá and three FGDs in La Paz reported that women made financial decisions alone, only one FGD in Lempira reported as such. FGDs held in Lempira were also more likely to cite machismo as a barrier to financial decision-making (4 FGDs). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in Santa Barbara were less likely to report that spending decisions were made jointly (4 FGDs compared with 6 FGDs in Ocotepeque and 7 FGDs in Copán), or that women made spending decisions alone (1 FGD, compared with 4 FGDs in Ocotepeque and 4 FGDs in Copán).

## **WEAI 4 – Leadership – (Community Decision-Making)**

**Respondents reported notable changes in women’s community leadership and decision-making** (ACS-USAID: 15 of 25 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, of which 9 FGDs were with women; 10 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 11 of 23 FGs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, of which 9 were with women; 9 of 29 village-level KIIs). Respondents’ report that ACS-USAID activities have created more inclusive environments for women’s participation, and facilitated women’s confidence to speak up and take on leadership positions in community committees and water management boards. For ACCESS to Markets, respondents report that the activity has made women less fearful about participating in community groups outside of the ones they were previously involved in, such as church groups and parents groups. Women are now more actively participating in water management boards, cooperatives, and other community groups. Respondents also report that project activities have made men more cognizant of their chauvinism within community meetings, and more mindful about supporting women.

*“They are part of several organizations, you can see women’s leadership while working in organizations, and in family gardens. Previously they stayed at home. Now you see women taking care of her family and also involved in other activities in the community.”* (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Village-level KII)

*“We were very chauvinistic before because we wanted everything for us and there was no opportunity for women. But now through USAID and through the programs that are being implemented, the techniques have been incorporated, it seems that we are half and half, the woman has also been motivated and they have seen the program is excellent, they have had more opportunities.”*  
(ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Village-Level KII)

**Differences by Gender:** Men and women cited differing barriers to women’s community leadership and decision-making, and this pattern is similar across both FtF activities. While men did not report any persisting barriers to women’s community decision-making, women reported that machismo was still a barrier (ACS-USAID: 5 FGDs, 3 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 2 FGDs, 6 village-level KIIs). Women noted that during some meetings, it is still common for men speak over women, intimidate women, and do not take their views into consideration. Women also reported other barriers to engaging in leadership roles in the community, though less commonly. These included, lack of time (1 FGD, 3 village-level KIIs), lack of confidence (1 village-level KII), illiteracy (1 FGD), and fear (2 FGDs).

**Differences by Department:** There were no notable differences by department for either FtF activity.

## **WEAI 5 - Time**

**Women expressed varying levels of satisfaction with the personal time available to them.** While some women expressed being satisfied with the time available to them (6 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries), others felt that between their household duties, supporting their spouses, and other responsibilities, there was not enough time to relax, or take part in other activities (6 of 24 FGDS with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, 1 village-level KII; 5 of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries). For those whose who were satisfied with their personal time, women in 3 FGDs reported that the time-saving activities in agriculture and processing introduced by ACS-USAID enabled them to have more time to rest.

Women who were not satisfied with the level of personal time they had reported that although they were generating more income through project activities, they were having a difficult time balancing household responsibilities, work responsibilities, and rest or leisure. In one group discussion, women extensively discussed how much more difficult time management is during the coffee harvest season. Women in one FGD also reported that project activities did not take their existing work loads into account, for example when planning training activities.

*“They are throwing us into the same bag men are, with the same needs and aspects. For example in technical assistance in the field, women have to adapt to the same time of men’s training. It is easier for a man to go work on the farm, we have to make a lot of things before we can go work on the farm, I think the program is missing that component; it would be good to promote it.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Women Processors/Value Added FGD)*

Although it was not common, women in some ACCESS to Markets FGDs did report that labor-saving practices had brought significant changes to their available time (4 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries). These respondents reported that irrigation systems have saved them significant time, as they no longer water their crops with pails. Women also reported that equipment they received through ACCESS to Markets assistance, such as coffee dryers and equipment for poultry production, had enabled them to work more efficiently. Women in one focus group also reported sharing and rotating child care responsibilities with the processors in their group, to allow members of the group to have more personal time and flexibility.

**Differences by Gender:** Men were not asked about their perceptions of women’s satisfaction with personal time.

**Differences by Department:** There were no notable differences by department for either FtF activity.

## **7. Have the gender strategy and actions of FtF had an impact on patterns of poverty?**

The FtF activity gender strategies emphasize a focus on activities to reduce gender gaps, especially with respect to women’s access to productive assets, inputs and technologies, and activities that promote the inclusion and participation of women in economic growth and all activities related to improving welfare, health and household nutrition. Importantly, the gender strategies also highlight that the entire household is viewed as the client by both activities, rather than specific individuals within households. In other words, the gender strategies confirm that the activities aimed to take a “whole household” approach to engagement and involvement in training and technical assistance. This approach includes targeting women for engagement in income-generating agriculture-related activities in which they are typically more marginalized.

As such, examination of the gender-disaggregated associations of direct clients in households with overall household income or poverty results is a relevant contribution to the analyses under this learning theme. In examining the results from Table 8 (Column 1 and 2 for ACCESS to Markets and Column 3 and 4 for ACS-USAID), we see that whether the direct client in the household is female or not has no effect on either the poverty status or per capita daily income of the household. Beyond this, the datasets available for this evaluation do not allow for a household-level analysis of the association of specific elements of each activity’s gender strategy with household-level outcomes.

## **8. Is there an observable difference between the results achieved through the different ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets implementation of the gender strategies?**

Comparing the results on poverty status and per capita daily income from Table 8, we observe that households in the ACCESS to Markets activity were slightly more likely to be above the Honduran poverty line and have higher per capita daily incomes. However, female clients in neither activity experienced outcomes that differed from male clients. In other words, while participants in the ACCESS to Markets program were likely to be economically better off, female clients were not any better or worse than their male counterparts for either of the two activities.

### Learning Theme 3 Conclusions

- Despite weak econometric evidence, the qualitative evidence suggests that the FtF interventions have made substantial gains in improving women's empowerment in agriculture.
- Women's involvement in decision-making for agricultural production and financial decisions has shown the strongest improvement, while the qualitative evidence for changes to women's sole or joint ownership of assets is less strong.
- Gendered social norms and women's lack of income they control contribute to persisting barriers on women's ownership of assets.
- There are few substantive differences in patterns of results for ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets.
- The data available do not enable analysis of the impacts of the FtF gender strategies on patterns of household poverty status. However, the econometric analysis finds no evidence of a difference in poverty or income results depending on whether the direct client in the household was male or female for ACCESS to Markets. This is in line with the activities' "whole household" approach to engagement, both on gender issues and all activities related to household health, nutrition and welfare. For ACS-USAID, households with male clients were better off.

## 5.4 LEARNING THEME 4: INTEGRATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND NUTRITION COMPONENTS

The learning questions under Learning Theme 4 are answered through an analysis of qualitative data only. The quantitative data available for this evaluation does not permit econometric analysis that can inform on this learning theme (explained in more detail below), hence supplemental qualitative data are used to gain anecdotal insights into the nature of household participation in nutrition component activities, and perceived effects of the FtF activities on household food consumption patterns, dietary diversity, and overall health and nutrition. Findings are also summarized on household perceptions of nutritional education centers. To gain insights from the qualitative data into whether the nutrition component had an add-on nutrition effect for households, results are compared across qualitative data collected in villages that received only the agricultural component, and those that received both the agricultural and nutrition components of the activity.

The data on children's nutrition indicators provided to the evaluation team does not contain appropriate identification variables that enable linking the individual child to a given household (see evaluation limitations in Section 4. This prevents, among others, examination of whether malnutrition is changing as a result of activity exposure, or relationships between changes in household incomes and changes to children's malnutrition status.

As a next-best but less desirable option, the evaluation team also attempted to conduct a municipality-level descriptive statistical analysis comparing average nutrition and health status of children in municipalities that received nutrition services with those in municipalities that did not receive services. Data on whether a household received nutrition services was also provided to the evaluation team as a separate household-level dataset that cannot be merged with the children's nutrition and health survey data for the reasons explained above. The evaluation team aimed to construct a municipal-level variable indicating receipt of nutrition services, however this uncovered inconsistencies in some of the data, and the results suggested only one household where no household received nutrition services. Given the nature of inconsistencies across the datasets provided to the team, it seems possible that the children's nutrition & health data in the program years (2016 and 2017) were only collected from households that received services under this component. Due to this and data reliability issues, a meaningful quantitative analysis of the nutrition and health data to answer this learning question does not appear to be possible either at the individual or at the municipality level.

### Key Findings for Learning Theme 4

- Limitations in the household survey and child nutrition data provided to the evaluation team prevented the team from being able to conduct quantitative analysis for this learning theme.

Comparing nutrition results for households in communities that received the agricultural component with those that received the combined agricultural and nutritional component was not possible because our review suggests that the data on nutrition and health is likely collected only for households that received nutrition services.

#### Qualitative Findings for Learning Theme 4

- **Respondents perceived improvements in household nutrition as a result of the FtF activities.** This was reported in half of the ACS-USAID sample and nearly 40 percent of the ACCESS to Markets sample. Nutrition improvements primarily derived from beneficiaries consuming more produce and more diverse products from their own gardens. Respondents pointed to the introduction of new crops and quality improvements as key reasons for improved diets, together with meal preparation trainings that mothers received. Though less commonly noted, some respondents from the ACCESS to Markets sample also reported that their increased income had enabled them to purchase additional nutritious foods for their families.
- **Respondents perceived linkages between improvements to household nutrition overall and child nutrition within the household.** This perception was not limited only to villages that had received the nutrition component. Some respondents in the ACCESS to Markets sample also linked improved child nutrition to improved school lunches brought about by increased producer sales to local schools in their area, but this was less common.
- **Respondents noted persistent challenges to obtaining more diverse and nutritious diets, including a lack of water, lack of financial resources to buy food, and a continued preference by households to sell all of their produce rather than consume it.**
- **Improvements in household nutrition were perceived beyond those households that received the integrated nutrition and health component.** Improved nutrition outcomes were reported in all FGDs held with respondents who received the integrated nutrition and health component, but also in a substantial proportion of FGDs held with respondents who had only received the agricultural production component (75 percent of agricultural production only ACS-USAID FGDs, 40 percent of agricultural production only ACCESS to Markets FGDs).
- **There is some indication that differences in nutrition outcomes could result from value added by the FtF nutrition component activities.** ACCESS to Markets respondents from villages that received the nutrition component reported that trainings they received at Nutritional Training Centers had been instrumental in improving their understanding of nutrition overall, and especially child nutrition. Knowledge gained through meal preparation trainings was seen as most impactful for achieving nutrition gains, although respondents said that increased agricultural production and income were also important. Stakeholder KIs also supported a view that the additional education provided through the nutrition component helped beneficiaries overcome cultural or knowledge barriers on importance of eating nutritious foods, rather than just producing them for sale.
- **For both of the FtF activities, male respondents reported improvements in household nutrition more than female respondents.**
- **There is limited evidence for differential effects by department.**

#### 9. Is there a difference in the nutrition results among families that received only the agricultural component and those that received both the agricultural and nutritional component?

As noted above, the evaluation team drew on qualitative data to gain anecdotal insights into the nature of household participation in nutrition component activities, and perceived effects of the FtF activities on household food consumption patterns, dietary diversity, and overall health and nutrition. Findings are also summarized on household perceptions of nutritional education centers. To gain insights from the qualitative data into whether the nutrition component had an add-on nutrition effect for households, results are compared across qualitative data collected in villages that received only the agricultural component, and those that received both the agricultural and nutrition components of the activity.

Table 18: Heatmap of Perceived Improvements in Nutrition Outcomes

|                                           | FGDs      |           | Village-level KIIs |           | ACS-USAID - Integrated Nutrition & Health FGD Sample |          | ACCESS - Integrated Nutrition & Health FGD Sample |          |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------------------|----------|
|                                           | ACS-USAID | ACCESS    | ACS-USAID          | ACCESS    | Yes                                                  | No       | Yes                                               | No       |
| Perceived improvements in nutrition       | 13        | 9         | 22                 | 16        | 7                                                    | 6        | 5                                                 | 4        |
| Perceived improvements in child nutrition | 10        | 6         | 22                 | 1         | n/a                                                  | n/a      | n/a                                               | n/a      |
| <b>FGD/KII totals</b>                     | <b>24</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>27</b>          | <b>29</b> | <b>7</b>                                             | <b>8</b> | <b>5</b>                                          | <b>9</b> |

|               |
|---------------|
| Strong ≥ 50%  |
| Medium 25-49% |
| Weak <25%     |

**In both of the qualitative samples, respondents commonly reported that beneficiary households have better nutrition as a result of the FtF activity** (ACS-USAID: 13 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, 22 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 9 of 23 FGD with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, 16 of 29 village-level KIIs). Nutrition improvements were largely attributed to the consumption of foods from home gardens, including newly-instituted vegetable production that was supported by the FtF activities (ACS-USAID: 11 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 17 of 27 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 7 of 23 FGDs, 8 of 29 village-level KIIs). Respondents pointed to the introduction of new crops and improvements in quality as a result of irrigation and reduced use of chemicals. Respondents also reported improvements in diet as a result of meal preparation trainings mothers received from ACS-USAID (7 FGDs, 13 village-level KIIs). Respondents reported that ACS-USAID taught beneficiaries to prepare new foods and drinks with produce grown in their gardens, including vegetable-based salads, soups, and tortillas; drinks like atol and juice; and snacks.

*“We have learned to prepare [new recipes] through the support of USAID engineers... Mothers are taught how to prepare different foods, sometimes to prepare them differently [so that] children do not get bored [with the food], so they prepare them differently.”* (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Men Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)

In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents also indicated that previously, they did not always consume what they produced. However, through crop rotation, more diversified crop production, and the establishment of home gardens promoted by the FtF activity, respondents reported they were now consuming more of what they produced. Respondents also reported that increased income had enabled them to purchase additional nutritious foods for their families (4 of 23 FGDs, 7 of 29 village-level KIIs).

*“Families are healthier now because that family has had access to more resources, because they have been able to make more crops. Because now there’s an advantage with the project - the producer takes out the corn harvest and he can sow tomato and then he can rotate his crops because he has the system [in place]. He won’t have to invest, he only has to rotate the crop and that helps him in the economic part, the crop rotation they do in the plot.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Village-level KII)

**Respondents perceived that improvements in household nutrition has also led to improvements in child nutrition.** In ten of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 22 of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents spoke of improvements in children’s nutrition as a result of ACS-USAID activities. This perception was not limited only to villages that had received the nutrition component. The perceived reasons for improved child

nutrition were largely the same as those responsible for improvements in nutrition at the household level (i.e., new crops, improvements in food quality, meal preparation training for mothers). In addition, some respondents mentioned that children now eat improved school lunches as a result of producers' sales to local schools (3 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in villages that received the nutrition component reported that trainings they received at Nutritional Training Centers had been instrumental in improving their understanding of nutrition overall, but especially child nutrition in particular (6 of 23 FGDs, 9 of 29 village-level KIIs). Respondents reported that children are now attending school more often and falling sick less often. Respondents also report that while increased production and income has helped members of the community, knowing what to do with new crops and how to prepare nutritious foods has been much more impactful in supporting their family's health (4 of 23 FGDs, 7 of 29 village-level KIIs).

**Despite significant improvements, FtF beneficiaries also reported persisting challenges to achieving more diverse and nutritious diets.** As the key route to improved diets is through consumption of foods they produce, respondents highlighted that water required to grow crops (ACS-USAID: 4 FGDs, 3 village-level KIIs; ACCESS to Markets: 5 of 23 FGDs, 2 of 29 village-level KIIs); high cost of inputs (seeds, fencing, other supplies) required to maintain production in their home gardens (6 of 23 FGDs, 1 of 29 village-level KIIs), lack of financial capacity to buy food (3 FGDs, 7 village-level KIIs); resistance to change (1 FGD, 6 KIIs); and because some producers prefer to sell all of their goods rather than consume a portion in the household (5 village-level KIIs) were the biggest obstacles to achieving more nutritious diets. In some cases, respondents noted that water sources in their communities were located on private properties, which made installing irrigation systems difficult.

Village-level KIIs and department-level KIIs also note that cultural factors create unique challenges in coffee production communities. In some communities, children's coffee consumption was noted to affect children's growth and bone health (2 KIIs with ACCESS-USAID staff, 5 village-level KIIs). These respondents also noted that during the coffee harvest season, mothers who harvest coffee often take their children with them to the fields during the day. This was seen to compromise gains they may have made on proper feeding practices outside the harvest season, as children eat less during that period (2 KIIs with ACCESS-USAID staff, 4 village-level KIIs). To counter this, nutrition and health stakeholders are exploring options for creating snack packets for mothers to take with them during the day.

**Differences by Gender:** In the ACS-USAID sample, male respondents reported improvements in household nutrition more than female respondents (10 male FGDs, 16 male village-level KIIs; 3 female FGDs, 9 female village-level KIIs). There were no notable differences by gender in the ACCESS to Markets sample.

**Differences by Department:** For ACS-USAID, lack of water as a challenge to achieving nutrition gains was mentioned more often by respondents in La Paz (2 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) and Intibucá (2 FGDs, 1 village-level KII) than Lempira (1 village-level KII). Financial capacity was mentioned far more by respondents in Lempira (3 FGDs and 4 KIIs in Lempira) than La Paz (3 village-level KIIs) or Intibucá (0 FGDs, 0 village-level KIIs). Beneficiaries selling their best produce rather than consuming it was only mentioned in Lempira (3 village-level KIIs) and Intibucá (2 village-level KIIs). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in Copán more commonly cited water availability as a constraint for achieving improved nutrition. These respondents indicate that consuming vegetables is very difficult from January to April (3 FGDs and 2 village-level KIIs in Copán, compared with 2 FGDs in Ocotepeque and none in Santa Bárbara).

#### **10. If so, are these differences the result of value added by the nutritional component?**

Given the limitations in the quantitative data to address this learning questions, the evaluation team took a two-pronged approach with the qualitative data to examine whether beneficiaries' stated improvements in nutrition were likely linked to receipt of integrated nutrition and health components from the FtF activity. First, the evaluation team compared key nutrition findings from FGDs with respondents that had received only the

agricultural production component with those who received both the production and nutrition/health components. Second, key informants working across villages were asked directly about observed differences in nutrition outcomes for households that received only the production component compared to those who had also received the add-on health/nutrition component.

**Nutrition improvements were more strongly evidenced among beneficiaries who received the additional integrated nutrition and health component, but respondents also reported nutrition improvements among beneficiaries who did not receive this add-on component.** Of the 13 FGDs where respondents reported improved household nutrition as a result of ACS-USAID, half of them were held with respondents who had received the integrated nutrition and health components (7 of 7 agricultural production and nutrition FGDs). Nutrition improvements were noted in all of the ACS-USAID FGDs held with respondents who received the nutrition add-on component, but it was also highlighted in 35 percent of FGDs held with beneficiaries who did not receive the nutrition component. In other words, six of the 13 FGDs that reported positive nutrition outcomes had only received the agricultural production component of the FtF activity, without the added nutrition component (2 agricultural production FGDs, 4 processor/value added FGDs). For the ACCESS to Markets sample, half of the FGDs where respondents reported improved household nutrition as a result of Access to Markets were held with respondents who had received the integrated nutrition and health components. This constituted nearly all of the FGDs held with beneficiaries of the integrated nutrition and health component in the Access to Markets qualitative sample (5 of 6 such FGDs). Respondents in an additional four FGDs, or roughly 25 percent of the remaining sample, also reported positive nutrition outcomes although they had only received the production component (2 agricultural production FGDs, 2 processor/value added FGDs)<sup>39</sup>. These respondents also reported important gains in hygiene, noting that they were implementing more hygienic practices.

**Some key informants noted that beneficiaries who received the additional nutrition/health component had better nutrition outcomes than those who received only the production component** (ACS-USAID: 8 of 27 village-level KII; ACCESS to Markets: 9 of village-level 29 KIIs). Of the eight ACS-USAID village-level KIIs, four were with government and/or nutrition/health stakeholders, as were five of the nine village-level KIIs in the ACCESS to Markets sample. For respondents who elaborated on why they felt the nutrition was better among beneficiaries who received both interventions, their responses suggest that the additional education provided through the nutrition/health component was perceived to have helped beneficiaries overcome cultural or knowledge barriers on importance of eating nutritious foods, rather than just producing them for sale. Informants also reported that training received through the nutrition and health component enabled households to know what to do with their new crops. These respondents also indicate that the children in families receiving both components are better nourished.

*“I have shared experiences with other municipalities that are not part of Lempira and it is in the production part, you get families to produce many vegetables but they will not eat them. Why? Because they sell their better products. If it is cabbage, they sell the better cabbages. They keep the ones with less quality for consumption, right. If you only approach production, it has to do with reality. We do not educate in the nutrition part. Our biggest goals with the families are to educate them to give the best food to the children and not the parents. When you only advise in the production part, the farmer will only learn to sell.”* (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Female Government and/or Nutrition or Health Stakeholder KII)

*“In the end the ones who receive the production component produce and ultimately consume [the products] themselves. Similarly, the ones who receive the health component, their nutritious status is also improving because of the education that has been provided to them. The education includes being conscious of consuming*

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<sup>39</sup> USAID notes that agricultural extension agents for both activities also received training on nutrition issues and integrated this into their assistance for beneficiaries. If this was done extensively, this could be a contributor to reported improvements among beneficiaries who did not receive the nutrition add-on component directly.

*those things that are going to be beneficial for your body and no longer eating junk foods.” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Male Government and/or Nutrition or Health Stakeholder KII)*

*“Before, [they] did not have access to a nutritional training center. Now they have it and the center helps the beneficiaries improve their skills. A beneficiary of USAID can make use of this center, where they can train, where they can take their child who is not in such good conditions. Right now, there is a big difference between these two types of beneficiaries as you well mention it.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Barbara, Male Government and Nutrition/Health Stakeholder)*

Department-level KIIs also anecdotally report better well-being for households who received both the nutrition and production components of the activity. Interviews with FtF activity staff (5 of 5 ACS-USAID KIIs and 3 of 3 ACCESS to Markets KIIs) report better outcomes for these households including improved nutrition, more consumption of vegetables introduced by the activity, reduced sugar consumption, fewer sicknesses among such households, and more hygienic practices.

#### Learning Theme 4 Conclusions

- The data available for this evaluation do not enable econometric analysis on whether nutrition results differ for families that received the agricultural component relative to those that the received both the agricultural and the nutritional component.
- Qualitative results suggest household perceive improvements to household and child nutrition as a result of the FtF activities, primarily through crop diversification, consuming more produce, and meal preparation trainings for mothers.
- There is limited evidence for greater improvements among those who received the integrated agricultural and nutrition components through the data available, and improved nutrition was also reported by a large proportion of FGDs held with beneficiaries who had only received the agricultural component.
- While the anecdotal qualitative evidence for this appears to be positive, a stronger determination should rest on more rigorous quantitative analysis of nutrition outcomes to the extent it is possible with available data.

### 5.5 LEARNING THEME 5: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IRRIGATION STRATEGY

The learning questions under Learning Theme 5 are answered through a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Econometric analysis examines changes in household participation in irrigation systems and use of drip irrigation, and how use of drip irrigation affects household poverty status and income. The supplemental qualitative data provide an understanding from beneficiaries and key stakeholders on how irrigation access has affected household agricultural production, household incomes and overall economic wellbeing, and household perceptions on potential linkages to improvements in household health and nutrition. In addition, perceptions on management issues and overall sustainability were also discussed.

#### Key Findings for Learning Theme 5

- **Households who were part of an irrigation system were more likely to use drip irrigation technology than those who did not participate in an irrigation system for the ACS-USAID sample only.**
- **There is no econometric evidence that household participation in the irrigation system is associated with increased household income or increased likelihood that household will be above the poverty line in result years.**

#### Qualitative Findings for Learning Theme 5

- **There is qualitative evidence that improved access to drip irrigation by FtF activity beneficiaries is a key factor in increased agricultural production and income.** More than half of both ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets village-level KIIs reported improved beneficiary household

incomes as a result of FtF activities. Respondents explained that those who received irrigation access improved the quality and quantity of their agricultural products. While improvements in yield allowed producers to sell more product, those producers who improved quality were also able to meet the rigorous quality standards of market partners and further increase their incomes.

- **Qualitative data for the ACS-USAID sample suggests some improvements to water management were obtained.** In 25 percent of FGDs and one third of village-level KIIs in ACS-USAID areas, respondents felt that water waste had decreased as a result of ACS-USAID activities. This included efficiencies in water use gained through the use of drip irrigation systems, but also trainings on water conservation, introduction of water rationing/scheduling of usage times, and the implementation of fines for overuse. Respondents in the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample were less likely to report reductions in water wasted.
- **Respondents in both qualitative samples highlighted several persistent challenges to water management, especially inadequate water supply.** Inadequate water supply was noted in 75 and 60 percent of the ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets FGDs samples, respectively. Additional challenges highlighted by respondents included challenges maintaining aging and damaged system infrastructure, and scheduling water use among system members. To a lesser degree, respondents in the ACCESS to Markets sample also highlighted system installation limitations due to the terrain or inability to negotiate water usage rights with landowners (both of these issues were raised more commonly in Copán).
- **Irrigation system sustainability over the longer term is a concern across both of the FtF activity areas.** Key concerns focus on ability to pay for maintenance and other associated costs. Stakeholder KIIs noted that irrigation system membership fees and numbers are too low to cover maintenance costs on their own. Government stakeholders say that municipalities do not have the ability to provide supplemental funds.
- **There is little evidence that beneficiaries perceive knock-on effects of improved irrigation access on household health and nutrition.** This link was made very infrequently, in only one or two FGDs per FtF activity sample, and by a similarly low number of activity or government stakeholders.
- **Differences by gender appear to be minor.** Water scheduling problems were mentioned somewhat more so by men than women respondents.
- **There are few substantive differences by department.** The only notable difference is that in the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample, there was more indication that challenging terrain and negotiations over water usage rights with landowners complicated system installation and maintenance.

## **II. Does irrigation committees' participation in compensation for ecosystem services influence the sustainability of the irrigation system?**

Due to the lack of data on participation in a payments for ecosystem services program in the survey data provided to the evaluation team, it was not possible to answer this learning question through the quantitative datasets provided to the evaluation team. Qualitative findings summarized below focus on aspects of irrigation system sustainability discussed by respondents.

**In village-level KIIs for both activities, respondents raised concerns on the sustainability of irrigation systems over time.** Of the five village-level KII respondents from the ACS-USAID qualitative sample who discussed the financial sustainability of irrigation systems, four had concerns about beneficiaries being able to continue to pay for maintenance and other associated costs into the future. Of the seven village-level KII respondents from the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample who discussed the financial sustainability of irrigation systems, six of them discussed limitations on beneficiaries' continued use of the systems. Some respondents mentioned that associations were unable to maintain the systems, often because fees and membership numbers were too low to cover maintenance costs without support from USAID (2 village-level KIIs, 1 department KII).

*"Of the biggest challenges for me, in the matter of irrigation systems, is sustainability. It has been the Achilles heel of the Project. As I was saying, it would be nice to come after the Project ends, come after three years and see the irrigation system I left in Gualguire that is working fine, that the beneficiaries are giving it sustainability just like the*

one in San Antonio. [But,] guarantee that when the Project leaves, usually the producers say they will be fine, because to have the project is to ensure sustainability and that beneficiaries assume the commitment and the challenge that they have to clean. [But], suddenly in a while they will have to change pipelines and [say]: ‘where is the money? USAID did not give it, [therefore] I will not put it.’” (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Mixed Gender Beneficiary KII)

“As I say, if it is an association or a group, they have to create a fund so that at the time if the system fails, [they can] make use of that fund to be able to maintain the irrigation system. Within the commonwealth, we do not have the capacity to give such assistance to these irrigation systems really. [We have to] make an approach between groups and [households] to be able to make [it so that] the maintenance and the irrigation systems do not decay. Maybe sometimes these groups or some people ask for support from the municipalities, and some municipalities do not have the money to help them.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Male Government Official KII)

**Differences by Gender:** There were no notable differences by gender, however in the ACCESS to Markets sample, all seven of the village-level KII respondents who discussed the financial sustainability of irrigation systems were men.

**Differences by Department:** There were no significant differences across departments for either of the FtF qualitative samples.

## 12. Has additional investment in irrigation projects had an impact on the use and management of water in the zone of influence? If yes, what was that impact?

The evaluation team examined whether households’ participation in an irrigation system is associated with increased use of drip irrigation using a logistic regression model similar to equation (2):

$$Y_{hctr} = \alpha + \beta X_{ht} + \gamma_1 E_{hct} + \gamma_2 IR_{hct} + \gamma_3 IR * E_{hct} + C_c + R_r + \varepsilon_{hctr} \quad (3)$$

where  $Y_{hctr}$  is the probability of household  $h$  using drip irrigation technique<sup>40</sup> in cohort  $c$  in year  $t$  and in department  $r$ ;  $IR_{hct}$  is a dummy variable that equals 1 if the household participated in an irrigation system and 0 if the household did not<sup>41</sup>. Coefficient  $\gamma_2$  represents the difference in the probability of using drip irrigation between households that participated in an irrigation system and those that did not, and coefficient  $\gamma_3$  represents the correlation in exposure and the outcome variable  $Y$  for households who participated in an irrigation system.

As shown in Table 19, households who participated in an irrigation system were more likely to use drip irrigation only for the ACS-USAID activity. For the ACS-USAID sample, the log odds of using drip irrigation for these households was higher by 2.81, or a probability of 15.2 percent. Given that the regression takes into account the fact that some households were already using drip irrigation at baseline, the increase in the probability of using drip irrigation for those who were exposed to the activity’s irrigation strategy shows a net gain in efficiency in the use of irrigation technology.

**Table 19: Correlations between Program Exposure and Using Drip Irrigation**

|  | ACCESS to Markets | ACS-USAID |
|--|-------------------|-----------|
|--|-------------------|-----------|

<sup>40</sup> Whether a household uses drip irrigation is self-reported by the household, via the ACS-USAID / ACCESS to Markets household survey.

<sup>41</sup> The information on whether the household participated in an irrigation system or not was provided separately to the evaluation team by the implementing partner, Fintrac.

|                                                         | Probability of using drip irrigation | Probability of using drip irrigation |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Length of exposure                                      | -0.29<br>(0.17)                      | 0.27<br>(0.16)                       |
| Participation in an irrigation system                   | 0.56<br>(0.71)                       | 2.81***<br>(0.55)                    |
| Length of exposure x participation in irrigation system | 0.35<br>(0.24)                       | -0.28<br>(0.19)                      |
| Baseline background characteristics                     | Yes                                  | Yes                                  |
| Cohort fixed effects                                    | Yes                                  | Yes                                  |
| Department fixed effects                                | Yes                                  | Yes                                  |
| Model                                                   | Logistic                             | Logistic                             |
| Sample size                                             | 2,903                                | 2,621                                |
| R-squared                                               | 0.23                                 | 0.20                                 |

Note: \*\*\*/\*\*/\* Statistically significant at the 0.01/0.05/0.1 level. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors of corresponding regression estimates right above them.

**Some respondents in the qualitative sample reported that the activity's investment in irrigation projects, especially drip irrigation, has reduced water use among beneficiaries, and this was more commonly reported in the ACS-USAID sample.** In six of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and nine of 27 village-level KIIs, respondents reported that water waste decreased as a result of ACS-USAID activities, while this was only reported in two of the ACCESS to Markets FGDs, where respondents reported reductions in water waste due to more efficient delivery of water to plants through the drip irrigation system. Drip irrigation systems were also seen as the primary reason for decreased water usage among participants, as the systems replaced less efficient sprinkler systems, hoses, and buckets (ACS-USAID: 5 FGDs, 8 village-level KIIs). Several respondents described how drip irrigation had improved crop growth on their parcels compared with sprinkler irrigation (ACS-USAID: 3 FGDs, 3 village-level KIIs). Other ACS-USAID activities that were seen to have reduced water waste included trainings on water conservation, introduction of water rationing/scheduling of usage times, and the implementation of fines for overuse.

*“We save more water and the area is irrigated more than with the [other] system because sometimes the sprinklers had to be [on] about four hours or the whole day and the most they could irrigate was half, and with the [new] system it takes about two hours. It all depends on the plot.” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Men Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)*

*“Before they watered the vegetables using sprinklers. It depends how you water the vegetables, you can destroy the parcel or the plant. Vegetables are not like a big tree. You can’t put a hose on a baby. I cannot use a hose and bathe him. An older person can be put under a stream of water and hold a normal bath. So, it is more effective.”* (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Male Beneficiary KII)

**In both qualitative samples, respondents highlighted ongoing and substantial water access and management constraints.** In 18 of 24 FGDs and 15 of 27 village-level KIIs in the ACS-USAID sample, respondents noted that beneficiaries continue to lack adequate amounts of water needed for production. Commonly reported reasons for not having enough water include not having an irrigation point and insufficient water sources from which to draw for irrigation. Additionally, respondents mentioned challenges related to beneficiaries maintaining aging and damaged irrigation systems (5 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs) and scheduling water use among beneficiaries (3 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in 20 of 23 FGDs and 27 of 29 village-level KIIs reported continued challenges in water management, particularly during the summer. Many respondents reported water shortages as a challenge for implementing irrigation systems, either because there was no nearby source of water or because existing sources did not have enough water (14 FGDs and 19 village-level KIIs).



*Irrigation system in Copán*

*“There’s only one [water source] now. They say that there were many water sources before, in all the farms, but due to the climate change, deforestation, the coffee crops, and the avocado crops have decreased the water sources. Those that existed in the community have diminished. That wouldn’t have happened if the people who had those resources took care of them, because we would have taken the water we need for the irrigation system from there, so right now the water source is [only] for drinking water.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Female Village-level Beneficiary KII)

In the ACCESS to Markets sample, some respondents also noted additional environmental limitations to water access including that the terrain of their region was not conducive to installing irrigation pipes, often due to hilliness (5 FGDs and 4 village-level KIIs). In a few cases, respondents wished to install irrigation systems but could not negotiate water usage rights with landowners whose properties contained the potential water source (2 FGDs and 4 village-level KIIs). For those beneficiaries who were able to benefit from the systems, several mentioned ongoing challenges with managing watering schedules (3 FGDs and 7 village-level KIIs) or broken pipes (9 FGD and 4 village-level KIIs).

Respondents from 13 of 23 FGDs and eight of 29 village-level KIIs in the ACCESS to Markets sample reported that lack of water was a major factor hindering the success of other project objectives including producing vegetables, acquiring loans, implementing home gardens, or increasing agricultural production.

*“We received the technique [to improve milk production by planting grass]... we all did. The problem is that we have not put [it] into practice because our parcels need water and that is what we do not have right now. As they say, we are breathing the illusion [that we will] put into practice one day, when we have the system in the parcels.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Male Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)

**Differences by Gender:** In the ACS-USAID sample, scheduling problems were mentioned more by male respondents (3 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) than female respondents (2 village-level KIIs). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, men (4 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs) were more likely than women (1 FGD) to report that the terrain of their property hindered water access. More men (3 FGDs and 6 village-level KIIs) than women (1 village-level KII) reported challenges managing watering schedules.

**Differences by Department:** In the ACS-USAID sample, more respondents in Intibucá (4 FGDs, 4 village-level KIIs) noted reductions in water waste than in La Paz (2 FGDs, 2 village-level KIIs) or Lempira (3 village-level KIIs). In the ACCESS to Markets sample, respondents in Copán (3 FGDs and 3 village-level KIIs) noted that the terrain of their region impeded their ability to access water and install pipes for irrigation systems more often than those in Ocotepeque (1 FGD and 1 village-level KII) or Santa Bárbara (1 FGD). Copán respondents were also more likely to report challenges negotiating water usage rights with owners of water sources (2 FGDs and 2 village-level KIIs), compared with respondents in Ocotepeque (2 village-level KIIs) and Santa Bárbara (0 FGDs or KIIs).

### 13. Does access to drip irrigation affect the income level of a household? If so, has this change (in household income) had an impact on health and resiliency<sup>42</sup>?

To examine whether the length of program exposure is correlated with poverty status and income differently for households that participated in an irrigation system, we use equation (3) above with poverty status and income as dependent variables in separate regression models. As Table 20 shows, households that participated in an irrigation system did not have different results for poverty and income for either of the FtF activities. This is somewhat surprising, given that households who participated in an irrigation system were more likely to use drip irrigation at least for the ACS-USAID sample, and the perceived benefits on crop growth of drip irrigation related by FGD participants. However, there may be a variety of reasons why adoption of drip irrigation system may not immediately result in higher crop yield and thus crop income, including a potentially short time frame between system installation and the results data collection, or issues pointed to in the qualitative data, where beneficiaries also highlight ongoing irrigation system management and water access issues that may prevent some or many households from obtaining the clear benefits of drip irrigation absent these management challenges.

**Table 20: Correlations between Program Exposure and Participation in the Irrigation System on Poverty Status and Income**

|                                                  | ACCESS to Markets                       |                               | ACS-USAID                               |                               |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|                                                  | Probability of being above poverty line | Per capita daily income (USD) | Probability of being above poverty line | Per capita daily income (USD) |
| Length of exposure                               | 0.49***<br>(0.06)                       | 0.33***<br>(0.06)             | 0.24***<br>(0.07)                       | 0.18***<br>(0.05)             |
| Participation in irrigation                      | 0.19<br>(0.43)                          | -0.02<br>(0.41)               | -0.04<br>(0.40)                         | 0.52<br>(0.55)                |
| Length of exposure x participation in irrigation | -0.06<br>(0.14)                         | 0.02<br>(0.14)                | 0.07<br>(0.13)                          | -0.09<br>(0.14)               |
| Baseline background characteristics              | Yes                                     | Yes                           | Yes                                     | Yes                           |

<sup>42</sup> Irrigation's impact on resiliency is further discussed in Learning Theme 6.

|                          |          |       |          |       |
|--------------------------|----------|-------|----------|-------|
| Cohort fixed effects     | Yes      | Yes   | Yes      | Yes   |
| Department fixed effects | Yes      | Yes   | Yes      | Yes   |
| Model                    | Logistic | OLS   | Logistic | OLS   |
| Sample size              | 2,903    | 2,903 | 2,621    | 2,621 |
| R-squared                | 0.23     | 0.42  | 0.22     | 0.34  |

Note: \*\*\*/\*\*/\* Statistically significant at the 0.01/0.05/0.1 level. Numbers in parentheses are standard errors of corresponding regression estimates right above them.

**Among the qualitative sample, some respondents noted that improved access to drip irrigation through FtF activity had improved beneficiary household incomes, but the support for this is stronger in the ACCESS to Markets sample.** Respondents in three of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 14 of 27 village-level KIIs noted that access to drip irrigation had improved beneficiary household incomes. For the ACCESS to Markets sample, in nine of 23 FGDs and 16 of 29 village-level KIIs, the introduction of irrigation was credited by respondents with leading to higher agricultural yields, improved product quality, and making it possible to grow new, profitable crop varieties. Respondents attributed increased yields, improved product quality, and the ability to grow new crops to the introduction of drip irrigation.

*“It is logical that since you give one an irrigation system, the whole scenario changes, right? To irrigate under environmental conditions as has been done, as had been done before, and that is not a problem, now they have their irrigation systems and they can use it. They already have training, only [now with] the use of that irrigation, they can apply their irrigation with our inputs also to get better nutrition. They have the supplies, they have the market and their customers. And some of them, they have gone from being employees of some producer to being partners of the producer - there are nice experiences in this. People who after riding a bicycle went to buy a motorcycle, and now have their car. Before, [they were] paying freight maybe to take their harvest from the farm to the collection meeting point, and [now] you already have your car, [so] you do not pay [that cost]. Even if it is a humble car, but you have your car, right. They are also better at home. People who do not go to San Pedro to the maquila but [now stay] here, the local economy is more strengthened.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Male Financial Services KII)*

Department-level KIIs reported that access to drip irrigation has been a notable component of why households have been able to increase their agricultural outputs, as households now have the ability to produce year-round (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 3 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners). These informants noted that access to drip irrigation has also contributed to product quality, which improves market prices for producers.

**Few respondents in either qualitative sample directly linked drip irrigation with improvements to beneficiary household health or nutrition.** This link was only made in two of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and two of 27 village-level KIIs, and in one of 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries and three of 29 village-level KIIs.

Table 21: Heatmap of Benefits and Challenges of Irrigation

|                                                  | FGDs      |        | Village-level KIIs |        |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------------------|--------|
|                                                  | ACS-USAID | ACCESS | ACS-USAID          | ACCESS |
| <b>Benefits of Drip Irrigation</b>               |           |        |                    |        |
| Improved household income                        | 3         | 9      | 14                 | 16     |
| Reduction in water wasted                        | 6         | 2      | 9                  | 0      |
| Improved household health / nutrition            | 2         | 1      | 2                  | 3      |
| <b>Persistent Challenges to Water Management</b> |           |        |                    |        |

|                                                                        |           |           |           |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Inadequate water supply (e.g., lack of water source, irrigation point) | 18        | 14        | 15        | 19        |
| Scheduling water use                                                   | 3         | 3         | 4         | 7         |
| Maintaining irrigation infrastructure                                  | 5         | 9         | 4         | 4         |
| <b>FGD/KII totals</b>                                                  | <b>24</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>29</b> |

|               |
|---------------|
| Strong ≥ 50%  |
| Medium 25-49% |
| Weak <25%     |

### Learning Theme 5 Conclusions

- The econometric analysis does not provide evidence that household use of drip irrigation is associated with increased household income, but this could relate to a short time period between installation of irrigation systems (primarily in 2017) and the outcome data collection (2016-2018).
- However, qualitative results strongly suggest that improved access to drip irrigation by beneficiaries is seen as a highly influential factor enabling improved agricultural production, higher product quality, and increased incomes.
- There is weaker evidence for improved water management through the FtF activity support, and inadequate water supply remains a strong limiting factor, together with difficulties maintaining irrigation system infrastructure and scheduling water use among members.
- Sustainability of irrigation systems over the longer term is a strong concern, due to maintenance and other costs and insufficient membership fees and numbers to cover these costs.
- The data available for this evaluation do not enable analysis on whether participation in a payments for ecosystem services program affects the sustainability of the irrigation system.

## 5.6 LEARNING THEME 6: RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY

The questions in Learning Theme 6 rest on the sum of evaluation evidence. The qualitative data provide insights with respect to household capacity to mitigate economic and climatic shocks, beneficiary and service provider motivation and capacity, and aspects of financial sustainability. To inform on overall sustainability and increased resilience, we summarize qualitative findings related to beneficiary capacity, continued demand or need for services, service provider motivation and capacity, and aspects of financial sustainability. The qualitative data also provide insights into the types of shocks households are most faced with and the response strategies households undertake, together with their perceptions on how FtF intervention activities may have helped to strengthen their overall resilience.

### Key Findings for Learning Theme 6

- **Beneficiaries identified healthcare as the most significant economic shock facing households.** This was reported in more than 90 percent of ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets FGDs.
- **Beneficiaries reported that FtF activities have made them more prepared to deal with economic shocks.** ACS-USAID beneficiaries reported that training on savings was the intervention that has most prepared them to face unexpected economic shocks, while ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries reported

that additional income gained as a result of activities were responsible. Despite their increased feelings of preparedness, beneficiaries still most reported they used loans to pay unexpected expenses.

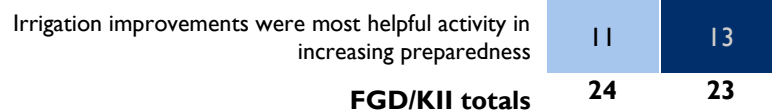
- **Beneficiaries reported drought as the main climatic shock that they face.** Respondents most worried about droughts in 75 percent of the ACS-USAID FGDs and all of ACCESS to Markets FGDs. The severity of drought is perceived to be getting worse.
- **Beneficiaries felt that FtF interventions related to irrigation had most helped them be better prepared to mitigate climatic shocks.** This was noted in about half of the ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets FGDs. However, some beneficiaries reported resorting to coping mechanisms such as seeking temporary work, selling assets, taking out loans, migrating, or stockpiling food and money to prepare for summer crop losses. Others felt that they had no way to cope other than wait for the next planting season. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, technical assistance in the areas of phytopathology and reforestation were also mentioned as contributing to improved resilience to climate shocks.
- **The types of unexpected expenses most concerning to beneficiaries varied by gender.** Men were more likely than women to report crop loss as a significant unexpected expense. Women were more likely than men to report children's health issues as an unexpected household expense.
- **There is limited evidence for differential effects by department.** For ACS-USAID, respondents in Lempira and La Paz reported feeling better prepared to face climatic shocks more often than those in Intibucá. There were few substantive differences by department across the ACCESS to Markets sample.

#### 14. Have FtF investments in Honduras increased the capacity of poor household beneficiaries (below \$2.42/person/day) to mitigate economic and climatic shocks? What types of interventions are the most and least helpful?

The evaluation finds suggestive evidence that the FtF investments have contributed to increased capacity of household beneficiaries to mitigate economic shocks, but there is less evidence of this for climatic shocks. The econometric and qualitative results provide evidence that beneficiaries of the FtF activities have seen gains to their household income and improvements in their poverty status during the FtF activity lifetime, while beneficiaries perceive greater capacity to deal with unexpected expenses and other economic shocks. Beneficiaries identify healthcare costs as the most significant economic shock they face, and report that FtF activity trainings on savings (ACS-USAID) and increased income through FtF support (ACCESS) have been most helpful for increasing their capacity to respond, and by extension their overall resiliency. Beneficiaries identify drought as the most significant climate shock they face, and report that FtF activity support to improve irrigation systems (ACS-USAID and ACCESS) has been most helpful for increasing their capacity to respond.

Table 22: Heatmap of Beneficiary Capacity to Mitigate Economic and Climate Shocks

|                                                                                            | FGDs      |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------|
|                                                                                            | ACS-USAID | ACCESS |
| <b>Economic Shocks</b>                                                                     |           |        |
| Health care is a significant economic shock                                                | 22        | 22     |
| Beneficiaries feel more prepared to face economic shocks                                   | 12        | 13     |
| Increased income from the project was the most helpful activity in increasing preparedness | 11        | 11     |
| Beneficiaries use loans to confront economic shocks                                        | 15        | 21     |
| Beneficiaries use new income / savings to confront economic shocks                         | 11        | 12     |
| <b>Climate Shocks</b>                                                                      |           |        |
| Drought is a significant climate shock                                                     | 18        | 23     |
| Excessive rain / floods are significant climate shocks                                     | 5         | 9      |
| Beneficiaries feel more prepared to face climate shocks                                    | 11        | 13     |



**Across both of the qualitative samples, respondents reported that health care costs generally comprised the most significant unexpected expense for households.** In 22 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 22 of 23 ACCESS to Markets FGDs, respondents mentioned their households were most worried about unexpected health care expenses, including those related to children’s health (7 FGDs in both samples) and deaths (5 ACS-USAID FGDs). Healthcare-associated costs that were mentioned included treatments for accidents, hospital stays, transportation to the hospital, and medicine. In addition to healthcare, respondents noted that costs associated with crop loss (6 ACCESS to Markets FGDs) and education/school fees (4 ACCESS to Markets FGDs) comprise significant unexpected expenses.

**There is evidence across the qualitative sample that the beneficiaries feel the FtF activity has made them more prepared to face unexpected expenses and respond to economic shocks.** For ACS-USAID, respondents reported that training on savings was the ACS-USAID intervention that has most helped beneficiaries feel prepared to face unexpected expenses. In 12 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, respondents noted they felt more prepared to face unexpected expenses as a result of ACS-USAID activities. In 11 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, respondents attributed their feelings of increased preparedness to having greater personal savings. In four of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, respondents mentioned that ACS-USAID activities had strengthened the functioning of agricultural and other collectives they participated in, such that those organizations are now able to provide financial support to members with unexpected expenses. As one respondent noted: *“When a complex situation arises, for a partner, a family member, or a neighbor, immediately we authorize the assembly, the decision is to support the person in need of urgent credit, and the urgency is that the partner goes to the bank and does the withdrawal and sends it to them. That has been the strategy, I’ve seen it personally”* (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Men Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD).

For Access to Markets, 13 of 23 FGDs reported that ACCESS to Markets had made them more prepared to face unexpected expenses. Many beneficiaries noted that project activities helped them increase their income by increasing sales of crops, animals, and processed goods (11 FGDs). Beneficiaries reported using this additional income to directly confront unexpected expenses. Some respondents also mentioned indirect improvements in their capacity to weather economic shocks, including through increased savings (3 FGDs) and improved creditworthiness in the eyes of lenders (2 FGDs). Infrequently, respondents also reported that trainings on savings (1 FGD), strengthening of credit/farmers’ associations (2 FGDs), or additional project activities had improved their ability to face unexpected expenses. As one beneficiary explains:

*“Yes [the increased income from the project] helps us because, even those of us who are organized in the cajas rurales ... when a partner has an emergency we don’t charge her any interest, we give her what she needs. If it’s an emergency, people don’t need to go around [looking for money], it is already in petty cash and when the person encounters emergency, she could have the needed amount and take the sick person without paying any interest.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Copán Female FGD, Agricultural Production Beneficiaries).

**Respondents report that loans are still the most common way beneficiaries pay for unexpected expenses.** Respondents in 11 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries said they typically use savings to pay for unexpected expenses such as healthcare, but it was more common for beneficiaries to say they typically rely on loans (15 of 24 FGDs). For those who take loans from banks, the high interest rates were linked to migration<sup>43</sup> by individuals seeking short-term income opportunities.

For ACCESS to Markets, respondents in 21 of 23 FGDs reported taking out loans from various sources as a primary coping mechanism. In 13 FGDs, beneficiaries reported borrowing money from friends, family members, or neighbors. Other less-common sources of loans included *cajas rurales*, intermediaries, and employers. The second most common means that ACCESS to Markets households used to deal with unexpected expenses was to tap into savings (12 of 23 FGDs), though some beneficiaries qualified that their savings were often insufficient. As one respondent puts it, *“I say that savings depend on the person's capability; it depends on the income and his status because in some cases some of us want to make a saving but if we don't even have enough for food, there's no chance to save.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male FGD, Processors/Value-Add). Less common coping mechanisms include selling crops or livestock (6 FGDs) or taking up temporary work (3 FGDs).

**Differences by Gender:** For ACS-USAID, men and women equally noted unexpected health care expenses as the main economic shock they face, but only women mentioned child health as a specific concern (7 female FGDs, 0 male FGDs). There were no differences in the number of male and female FGDs that reported feeling more prepared to respond to and weather economic shocks as a result of ACS-USAID activities. Taking loans to pay for large unexpected expenses was reported more often in FGDs held with men (9 FGDs) than with women (6 FGDs). For ACCESS to Markets, men were more likely than women to report crop loss as a significant unexpected expense (Men 5 FGDs; Women 1 FGD). Women were more likely than men to report children's health issues as an unexpected expense (Men 1 FGD; Women 5 FGDs).

**Differences by Department:** For ACS-USAID, a greater number of FGDs held with respondents in Intibucá and La Paz reported feeling better prepared to face economic shocks as a result of ACS-USAID activities than those in Lempira (5 Intibucá FGDs; 4 La Paz FGDs, 2 Lempira FGDs). For ACCESS to Markets, respondents in Copán were more likely than those in Ocotepeque or Santa Bárbara to report children's healthcare costs as a significant unexpected expense (Copán 5 FGDs; Ocotepeque 1 FGD; Santa Bárbara 0 FGDs). Respondents in Ocotepeque were more likely than those in Copán or Santa Bárbara to report using savings to pay for unexpected expenses (Ocotepeque 6 FGDs; Copán 3 FGDs; Santa Bárbara 3 FGDs). Respondents in Copán were less likely to report selling crops and livestock to confront unexpected expenses (Copán 0 FGDs; Ocotepeque 3 FGDs; Santa Bárbara 3 FGDs), but more likely to report turning to friends, relatives and neighbors to borrow money (Copán 6 FGDs; Ocotepeque 4 FGDs; Santa Bárbara 3 FGDs).

### **Climatic Shocks<sup>44</sup>**

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<sup>43</sup> Respondents indicated this migration was primarily internal migration in Honduras to work in factories in cities, or to harvest coffee elsewhere.

<sup>44</sup> At USAID's request, the evaluation team conducted further review of the data to examine whether the presence of an irrigation system may be related to these findings. We conclude that it is possible that irrigation system presence played a role in less negative results reported in some FGDs or feelings of greater preparedness, but does not appear to be strongly related to whether respondents reported negative climatic events, such as crop loss due to drought, for example. FGDs were tagged as being held in communities with an irrigation system or not using data provided by Fintrac during the qualitative site selection process. Irrigation system status data was available for 36 of 47 FGDs (77% of FGDs). Data for ACS-USAID was nearly complete, with irrigation system status missing one FGD; for ACCESS to Markets, this data was missing for ten FGDs. For both activities, a majority of FGDs were conducted in villages with irrigation systems, although it was not possible to confirm the status of whether FGD participants themselves were participating in these systems. At least 29 of 47 FGDs (or 62%) were conducted in villages with irrigation systems. For ACS-USAID, at least 18 of 24 FGDs (75%) took place in villages with irrigation systems. For ACCESS to Markets, at least 11 of 23 FGDs (or 48%) took place in villages with irrigation systems.

**Across both of the qualitative samples, respondents reported that drought is the main climatic shock that they face.** This was reported in 18 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and in all 23 FGDs with ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries.<sup>45</sup> Respondents noted that drought causes crop loss and livestock deaths, lower productivity and knock-on economic hardships. The severity of drought is perceived to be getting worse. The second most common climate shock mentioned was excessive rains or floods (5 ACS-USAID FGDs and 9 ACCESS to Markets FGDs)<sup>46</sup>, which lead to both direct crop loss and the propagation of plant diseases. Hurricanes, heatwaves, fires, frost, hail and plagues such as coffee rust were also stated as climate concerns, though to a lesser degree. Respondents noted that climate threats have worsened in recent years, with the unpredictability of events being of utmost concern.

*“[Drought] affects [us] a lot, it affects a lot more than before. You could say that here [in the past] we had four seasons of the year: winter, autumn, spring and summer... It rained constantly and not today, now we have to guess if it will rain or if it won’t.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male Processors/Value Add FGD)

Department-level KIIs also report that droughts are a primary concern for Access to Markets beneficiaries. They report that while the irrigation strategy seeks to address these challenges, beneficiaries can further mitigate these shocks through increased crop diversification (2 of 3 KIIs with Access to Markets Staff, 3 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners, 1 of 2 KIIs with financial services). Those who exclusively grow coffee, and no vegetable or other short-cycle crops, are noted to be particularly vulnerable as they do not have other income sources to help mitigate such types of shocks.

**Respondents reported that FtF activities related to irrigation have most helped beneficiaries feel better prepared to mitigate climatic shocks.** In 11 of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries and 13 of 23 ACCESS to Markets FGDs, respondents report feeling more prepared to mitigate climate shocks as a result of the FtF activities.<sup>47</sup> Irrigation system improvements were mentioned as a key contributing reason for this in all of these FGDs. USAID’s technical assistance in the areas of phytopathology and reforestation also came up as contributing to improved resilience to climate shocks in the ACCESS to Markets sample.

*“If we sow more there we’re going to produce more, because there’s the irrigation system. Even if the drought comes we’ll always have the irrigation system and that will help us.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Female FGD, Agricultural Production and Nutrition).

*“Because all those frosts ruined the crops of corn, beans and everything. And now, there has been a bit of change because there are pesticides and with effort we buy the fungicides and fumigate. Well, that helps and with the training we have received from USAID we have already learned to buy the medicines and to [apply] them to corn, beans and vegetables.”* (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Male FGD, Production/Value-Add)

However, these improvements were not universal. Among the ACCESS to Markets sample, some beneficiaries reported resorting to coping mechanisms such as seeking temporary work, selling assets, taking out loans,

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<sup>45</sup> Of the 23 ACCESS to Markets FGDs that reported drought as the main climatic shock they experienced, 11 FGDs were held in areas with irrigation systems, two FGDs were not, and data was unavailable for the remaining ten FGDs. Of the 18 ACS-USAID FGDs that reported drought as the main climatic shock they experienced, 13 FGDs were held in areas with irrigation systems, four FGDs were not, and data was unavailable for the last remaining FGD.

<sup>46</sup> Of the nine ACCESS to Markets FGDs that reported excessive rain or flood as a common climate shock, four FGDs were in areas with irrigation systems, one FGD was not, and data was unavailable for the remaining four FGDs. Of the five ACS-USAID FGDs that reported excessive rain or flood as a common climate shock, all were held in villages with irrigation systems.

<sup>47</sup> Of the 13 ACCESS to Markets FGDs that reported feeling more prepared, eight FGDs were in areas with irrigation systems, two FGDs were not, and data was unavailable for the remaining three FGDs. Of the 11 ACS-USAID FGDs that reported feeling more prepared to mitigate climate shocks, ten FGDs were in areas with irrigation systems and one FGD was not.

migrating, or stockpiling food and money to prepare for summer crop losses.<sup>48</sup> In 11 FGDs, respondents described not having mechanisms to recover or cope, and expressed feelings of not being able to do anything besides wait for the next planting season. In eight of 24 FGDs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries, respondents reported feeling at least somewhat unprepared to deal with droughts.<sup>49</sup> Water management problems (discussed in Learning Theme 5) and feeling powerless to combat droughts were commonly mentioned reasons.

*“Well, the important thing is this irrigation, this defense, because I see [it] and I have hopes that I will produce, or I have the option of continuing to sow. Because [if] it rains or not and I will continue to sow. Also, these places are dry and in the winters are poor, so through the irrigation system there is that advantage that says, well, the winter failed, but in the plot I can plant something to be able to face a situation; there is hope because of irrigation.”* (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Men Agricultural Production FGD)

**Differences by Gender:** For ACS-USAID, compared to FGDs held with female respondents, male respondents more frequently reported feeling prepared to mitigate climatic shocks (7 male FGDs; 4 female FGDs). There were no notable differences by gender in the ACCESS to Markets sample.

**Differences by Department:** For ACS-USAID, respondents in Lempira and La Paz reported feeling better prepared to face climatic shocks more often than those in Intibucá (6 La Paz FGDs; 4 Lempira FGDs; 1 Intibucá FGD). For ACCESS to Markets, beneficiaries in Santa Bárbara were slightly less likely to report that the project helped them feel more prepared to face climate shocks than those in Copán or Ocotepeque (Copán 5 FGDs; Ocotepeque 5 FGDs; Santa Bárbara 3 FGDs).

## 15. How has FtF contributed to ensuring sustainability (and increasing resiliency)?

### Beneficiary Capacity

Government and other nutrition/health stakeholders noted challenges to beneficiaries' ability to continue ACS-USAID activities after the project ends. Only three of these 11 stakeholders reported that they felt beneficiaries possessed necessary knowledge and resources to do so. Beneficiaries themselves were slightly more positive in village-level KIIs; six of 16 beneficiaries reported they had this capacity. All KII respondents reported that beneficiaries would share the knowledge gained through ACS-USAID activities with non-beneficiaries.

For the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample, 15 of 29 village-level KII respondents (7 of 17 beneficiaries and 8 of 12 government/health stakeholders) said beneficiaries would have sufficient knowledge to continue implementing ACCESS to Markets activities after the project ends. However, 13 of these interviewees also expressed concerns about beneficiaries' financial capacity (see Financial Sustainability, below). Most village-level KII respondents (24 of 29 KIIs) said that beneficiaries also would share their knowledge with non-beneficiaries, thus helping to strengthen gains overall, with many commenting that they had already done so. Department-level KIIs reported mixed sentiments around beneficiary knowledge and capacity to continue implementing Access to Markets activities. Some informants reported that beneficiaries need more time to truly solidify the impacts of the intervention and see long-term change (1 of 3 KIIs with Access to Markets Staff, 1 of 2 KIIs with financial services, 1 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners).

### Beneficiary Demand

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<sup>48</sup> Of the 11 ACCESS to Markets FGDs that described not having mechanisms to recover or cope, four FGDs were in areas with irrigation systems, two FGDs were not, and data was unavailable for the remaining five FGDs.

<sup>49</sup> Of the eight ACS-USAID FGDs that reported feeling somewhat unprepared to deal with droughts, four FGDs were in areas with irrigation systems, three FGDs were not, and data was unavailable for the remaining three FGDs.

In 15 of 27 ACS-USAID village-level KIIs, respondents reported that beneficiaries anticipated they would continue to demand, request, or need services provided by ACS-USAID after the activity had concluded. Specific services mentioned in village-level KIIs with ACS-USAID beneficiaries included help with identifying and growing new crops and gaining access to markets. Department-level informants also reported that beneficiaries will continue to demand services (4 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff, 3 of 3 KIIs with value chain partners, 3 of 3 KIIs with financial services). In one KII, a financial services partner reported that ACS-USAID had facilitated a trusting relationship between beneficiaries and their organization, to the extent that many beneficiaries felt comfortable contacting them directly. Another financial services partner reported that while they anticipated beneficiaries would continue to seek services from them, this may diminish over time as they become more self-sustained. Value chain partners also reported strong relationships with beneficiaries.

For the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample, 26 of 29 village-level KII respondents said that beneficiaries would continue to request and need project services after ACCESS to Markets ends. Specific services mentioned included technical assistance with growing crops, raising livestock, and maintaining irrigation systems. Department-level KIIs also anticipated that beneficiaries would continue to want or require services that had been provided through ACCESS to Markets (3 of 3 KIIs with Access to Markets staff, 2 of 2 KIIs with financial services, 3 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners). These informants felt that beneficiaries would primarily continue to seek assistance for credit access, crop diversification, and food preparation.

### **Service Provider Motivation/Capacity**

In four of 27 ACS-USAID village-level KIIs, respondents reported that they believed service providers working with the project are motivated and have sufficient capacity to continue providing some or all of their services in project communities once the project is completed. On the contrary, one female village-level KII respondent in La Paz reported some concern about technicians showing up. As she stated: *"Sometimes they don't come. Sometimes they say...Even with the project here... They call and say: 'Look, today we will not be able to arrive, because, the car broke down..."* ACS-USAID staff reported that they believed that service providers would continue working with the project and supporting beneficiaries (3 of 5 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff). However, for the nutrition component, informants expressed some concern about the ability of the government to continue providing nutrition and health services to beneficiaries after the activity lifetime (2 of 3 KIIs with ACS-USAID staff).

For ACCESS to Markets, village-level KII respondents expressed doubts about whether service providers such as extension officers and health centers would have the capacity to continue project activities after the activity lifetime. Only two of 29 village-level KII respondents said that their community's health center would certainly have the capacity to give assistance. Three respondents said local institutions would have only some capacity to carry out activities or would be able to continue if they found another donor. Three village-level KII respondents said local service providers would not have the capacity to carry out project activities post-project, due to lack of resources, institutions, or motivation.

Department-level KIIs report that service-providers for production activities and financial services would continue working with beneficiaries (3 of 3 KIIs with Access to Markets Staff, 2 of 2 KIIs with financial services, 3 of 3 KIIs with value-chain partners). Value-chain partners and financial services informants note that working with new beneficiaries may be different however (1 of 2 KIIs with financial services, 1 of 2 KIIs with value chain partners). These informants reported that financial services partners are used to working with Access to Markets beneficiaries, and have a certain level of trust in the knowledge they have acquired, and their capacity as producers. They were unsure if new producers would be able to access these services in the same way.

### **Financial Sustainability**

In 15 of 27 ACS-USAID village-level KIs, respondents reported that beneficiaries did not have financial means to cover costs associated with the services ACS-USAID provides. Specific costs that were noted included seeds, other productive supplies, and irrigation infrastructure costs. In six of 27 village-level KIs, respondents reported that beneficiaries did have the financial means to sustain project services on their own. This concern was reflected in department-level KIs as well (2 of 5 KIs with ACS-USAID staff, 3 of 3 KIs with value chain partners, 1 of 3 KIs with financial service partners), and particularly for costs associated with water source management and infrastructure. These informants anticipated that while beneficiaries have realized valuable gains, they would need more time to get to a level where they can support such costs on their own.

Across the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample, village-level KI respondents expressed doubts about the financial sustainability of the project. 22 of 29 village-level KI respondents anticipated varying degrees of challenges related to beneficiaries' ability to pay for ACCESS to Markets services, though seven of these respondents noted that some beneficiaries would be able to pay. The most common costs mentioned were those associated with irrigation systems, agricultural inputs, and technical assistance. As one government official explains, beneficiaries have the desire and knowledge to continue project activities, but not necessarily the economic resources:

*"We know how to produce. We are clear of the knowledge people have. [But] resources is a limitation. Our farmers the more they produce, the more they want. If today they produce 100 cucumbers, tomorrow they want to produce 200. [But] they have not yet achieved sustainability with the 100 cucumbers, therefore [they] need the economic support and logistics."* (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male Village-Level KI, Government Official)

Department-level KIs report that while all beneficiaries would have the willingness to pay for services, their capacity to pay would be limited (3 of 3 KIs with Access to Markets staff, 2 of 2 KIs with financial services, 3 of 3 KIs with value-chain partners). However, some informants report that there are some producer groups who have the capacity and desire to contract technical assistance in the future (1 of 3 KIs with Access to Markets staff, 1 of 3 KIs with value-chain partners).

**Differences by Gender:** There were no differences by gender in key findings related to sustainability.

**Differences by Department:** For ACS-USAID, there were no differences by department in key findings related to sustainability. ACCESS to Markets, respondents in Ocotepeque were more likely than those in Santa Bárbara or Copán to report that beneficiaries had sufficient knowledge to continue carrying out project activities (7 village-level KIs Ocotepeque; 4 Copán; 4 Santa Bárbara).

### Learning Theme 6 Conclusions

- The evaluation finds suggestive evidence that the FtF investments have contributed to increased capacity of household beneficiaries to mitigate economic shocks, but there is less evidence of this for climatic shocks.
- The econometric and qualitative results provide evidence that beneficiaries of the FtF activities have seen gains to their household income and improvements in their poverty status during the FtF activity lifetime, while beneficiaries perceive greater capacity to deal with unexpected expenses and other economic shocks.
- Beneficiaries identify healthcare costs as the most significant economic shock they face, and report that FtF activity trainings on savings (ACS-USAID) and increased income through FtF support (ACCESS) have been most helpful for increasing their capacity to respond, and by extension their overall resiliency.

- Beneficiaries identify drought as the most significant climate shock they face, and report that FtF activity support to improve irrigation systems (ACS-USAID and ACCESS) has been most helpful for increasing their capacity to respond to such events, but water management issues remain.
- Evidence for increased capacity to respond to droughts and other climatic shocks is less strong. Beneficiaries commonly resort to coping mechanisms such as seeking temporary work, selling assets, taking out loans, migrating, or stockpiling food and money, or have no coping mechanism.
- In terms of overall contributions of FtF activities to ensuring sustainability, beneficiary knowledge and capacity to continue implementing activities without FtF support is a concern for many stakeholders, while beneficiary demand for such services beyond the activity lifetime is perceived to be high. However, few beneficiaries and stakeholders believe that service providers such as extension officers and health centers have capacity to continue service provision without FtF activity support, due to lack of resources, sufficiently strong institutions, or motivation, and financial sustainability is perceived to be low.

## 5.7 ADD-ON ISSUE: MIGRATION

Migration is not part of the scope for this PE, however the evaluation team was asked to include some coverage on migration issues on the qualitative instruments. In general, USAID expressed interest in learning if and how migration may have changed the population in the FtF activity area, how migration has affected the community, main reasons people migrate and where people migrate to. In addition, there was an interest in understanding, primarily from IPs and local government stakeholders, the extent to which FtF activities may have reduced beneficiaries' perceptions of the need to migrate to other areas in Honduras, or outside of Honduras. Finally, there was interest in obtaining suggestions on activities that could be promoted to more effectively reduce migration. Migration is clearly a complex issue in the FtF activity areas, and the data collection for this PE was designed to provide limited supplemental information rather than strongly nuanced findings on this issue. Here, we summarize these preliminary findings from the ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets qualitative data, noting that the scope of this evaluation does not enable the evaluation team to provide comprehensive coverage or recommendations on this complex issue.

### Key Findings for Add On Issue: Migration

- **Migration was widely noted in both FtF areas.** Entire families migrate seasonally for coffee-harvesting, dramatically reducing village populations during those periods. Young men and women were noted as the most common demographic to migrate out of communities for longer periods of time, seeking economic opportunity and employment.
- **Migration has had both positive and negative effects on communities.** Migration was said to have caused family disintegration due to the separation of family members and reduced the size of the local agricultural workforce. Longer-term migration to places like Spain or the United States was seen to improve some local economies through remittances sent to extended family members in the area, although the reach of these positive impacts was viewed as more limited.
- **Temporary or seasonal migration around the coffee harvest was seen to have negative effects on achieving nutrition/health objectives for both activities.** ACCESS to Markets respondents also noted direct negative effects on production objectives due to labor shortages.
- **Some beneficiaries reported that by improving business, entrepreneurship, or micro-enterprise opportunities and the economic situation within communities, FtF activities had contributed to some people who would have migrated instead choosing to stay in their communities.** Evidence of this is stronger in ACCESS to Markets areas than in ACS-USAID areas.
- **FtF stakeholders in each zone suggest differing approaches to reducing migration.** To further reduce migration, ACS-USAID stakeholders suggested increasing production and supporting additional diversification of livelihood opportunities and microenterprises. In ACCESS to Markets areas, stakeholders suggested involving young people more directly in trainings, especially the children of beneficiaries, so they also have improved knowledge and a stronger skills base on which to draw.

- **There was little indication that beneficiaries in either area had permanently migrated out during the project lifetime at scale.**

Respondent discussion on migration clearly demonstrates a complex issue with several acknowledged trade-offs. Population loss in both of the FtF activity areas due to seasonal or long-term out-migration was widely noted. While entire families may migrate seasonally for coffee-harvesting elsewhere, dramatically reducing village populations during those periods, young men and women were noted as the most common demographic that currently migrates out of communities for longer periods of time. Out-migration was widely noted to leave smaller populations in the communities. In many FGDs, respondents expressed concern for the availability of labor and a working population in their communities, if the migration trend should continue.

**In nearly all ACS-USAID FGDs, the underlying reason cited why young people to migrate** is due to lack of economic opportunities in their communities. In some FGDs, it was noted that entire families also migrate out during the coffee-cutting season, greatly reducing the population in the community during that period.

*“In other words, in the case, as I say, there are people who are going illegally, they are leaving, to ruin their lives, there are people who have been kidnapped by the ‘Z’ and there are others who maybe arrive there and maybe they get caught by migration there, then they get there and come back. People want to improve, they want to have a permanent job, because here in Honduras there’s no work. In these places here, there are no sources of work, absolutely nothing.”* (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Men Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)

**In terms of migration effects on communities**, the two primary concerns raised by ACS-USAID FGD participants was reduced labor availability in the communities and disintegration of families. Out-migration to cut coffee during the coffee cutting seasons (typically from December through February) was widely noted to leave less labor availability to work on farms in the community, not only for labor on coffee farms in the community, but also providing other farm labor such as sowing corn or beans. Labor and workforce shortages were commonly seen as major effects of out-migration of youth from ACS-USAID areas. Some FGD respondents noted concern for the future with the current migration situation. For example, one individual noted that the current lack of economic opportunities in the area also discourages youth from studying or pursuing careers, and he foresaw eventual impacts on maintaining a professional working class in the area as a result. In another FGD, respondents noted that young people with training are unable to find skilled jobs or establish themselves in their trained profession, thus they leave to seek opportunities in the United States.

**In terms of where people migrate to**, respondents in some ACS-USAID FGDs, mentioned that migration to the United States or Spain is more common than to larger cities in Honduras, because people are concerned about gangs and the security situation in Honduran cities, such as in San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa or smaller secondary cities. Responses were somewhat mixed on this, with respondents in some FGDs indicating that migrants primarily go the United States, while in other FGDs respondents said that migration to the U.S. or larger cities in Honduras were both common, together with seasonal migration to cut coffee in other localities. In some FGDs, it was also noted that residents migrate to Mexico (Lempira FGDs) or El Salvador (La Paz FGDs).

For those who migrate to the United States, respondents viewed this to have both positive and negative effects on the community. On the positive side, respondents noted that remittances received by family who had remained in the community helped to improve household’s economic situation in the community and help the family to move forward. In addition, remittances were seen to provide employment opportunities within the community more broadly, for example by providing construction jobs in the community related to home improvements that families often chose to make with remittance income. On the negative side, regardless of whether male or female family members migrate, migration was noted often to leave children without one of their parents, or vice versa, and was seen to contribute to the disintegration of families. In some FGDs, respondents also mentioned concern for the safety of their children or younger extended family members who had left the community.

*“The mother or father is left disappointed because their big kid does as he likes, in my case my boy left when he was 17 years old, now [he is] 22 years old in the border, and that’s a phenomenon and it’s affecting because as a parent we never want our kids to leave. Some [parents] are left waiting, and yes, we’ll have to wait for God’s will because those paths [the children take] are never safe.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Men Processor/Value-added FGD)*

*“Those who leave for the United States at least send remittances, if you were lucky enough to enter send money that the relative here invests, to buy calves, buy your small farm, make your home. But the one who goes to San Pedro and Tegucigalpa, there are many who are going to get involved in criminal groups and that sooner or later will come to reverberate here. Because if they fail there and continue, they will come here and build a group ... And until now, thank God we are not very bad in that sense, but we have ...” (ACS-USAID, Intibucá, Men Agricultural Production FGD)*

There is some indication of varying effects or trends by Department. In Intibucá, loss of population and other negative effects of migration on the community were mentioned in all FGDs held in this Department. In La Paz, respondents in some FGDs noted that migration was primarily related to seasonal out-migration of youth to cut coffee during December through February. Young men and women also leave the community for other economic pursuits. It was noted that women primarily seek work as housekeepers, cooks, or similar housework positions in larger cities. Unlike Intibucá, FGDs held in a small number of communities in La Paz indicated they also experience some in-migration of individuals to their communities from other rural areas, noting the land was more fertile in their community or had better investment opportunities.

**Has the ACS-USAID activity helped reduce interest in migration?** Some respondents felt that by improving business, entrepreneurship, or micro-enterprise opportunities and the economic situation within communities, ACS-USAID activities have contributed to some people who would have migrated instead choosing to stay in the community. However, support for this by FGD respondents was not widespread, and there were mixed views on if and to what extent the project has contributed on this. In 3 of 8 FGDs held in Lempira (all women’s FGDs), respondents felt that ACS had helped to keep people from migrating, by improving economic conditions in the community. This was noted for agricultural producers, as well as for individuals engaged in micro-enterprise activities. In some cases, the installation of the irrigation system was pointed to as a key factor, seen as the factor that enabled producers to improve production sufficiently to sell produce at markets.

KIIs conducted with IPs and local government staff suggested a view that a continued focus by USAID on increasing agricultural production can help to more effectively reduce migration. For example, one KII gave the example that each coffee producer can employ five to 15 additional people. In addition, these KIIs advocated for more support for a diverse range of other permanent employment opportunities, such as in food preservation, strengthening artisan groups, sewing, woodworking, and the creation of other microenterprises. This was echoed by La Paz and Lempira KIIs with government stakeholders, who also added carpentry, cell phone technician and milk and meat processing to the list of potential opportunities.

In general, the viewpoint expressed by IPs and government stakeholders was that new trades and economic opportunities would need to be created within communities to more effectively stem migration to cities and other countries. These KII respondents underscored a similar point, that **supporting additional diversification of livelihood opportunities and microenterprises was seen as a way to contribute to reducing out-migration in their localities**. In La Paz, one village-level KII with an ACS beneficiary suggested more focus on generating additional alternative employment opportunities for young adults specifically, as they are not always interested in engaging in production/farming, and this is the primary demographic who migrates.

For the case of seasonal migration to cut coffee, village-level KII responses suggested this was seen as somewhat less disruptive, though it is perceived to have health and nutrition impacts on children and families. In La Paz, one community health worker explained how seasonal migration affected the project’s ability to meet its health and nutrition objectives, while a KII with a Lempira health worker made a similar point.

*“Yes, I expect 37 children in a community to make the AINCE meeting and if at least half migrated then it will have an impact in our attendance percentage and if it impacts our attendance percentage, when we measure our nutrition indicators, it will have a high impact, it won’t be really what the community is having, right.” (ACS-USAID, La Paz, Male Government and/or other nutrition and health stakeholder KII)*

*“Half of those children are not weighed in that period. They are left out of surveillance because those areas to which they migrate are not in the same department; these are areas that are not with the same process of centralization. The surveillance is not the same as what we have here. For example, if a child comes from another community, for us he may automatically access into surveillance but not where it is centralized. The surveillance system is different and that child often goes unnoticed. If the child needs vaccination, we do it but for the evaluation growth and development, it is not the same follow-up we give children here.” (ACS-USAID, Lempira, Female Government and/or other nutrition and health stakeholder KII)*

***There was little indication that ACS-USAID beneficiaries have migrated out during the project lifetime at scale.*** One Intibucá village-level KII noted that some beneficiaries had done so, but it was a very small percentage and those individuals had left a representative to continuing liaising with the project in his or her place.

***Migration dynamics and concerns among respondents in the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample were largely similar to that of ACS-USAID. In the ACCESS to Markets sample, migration was also widespread and both seasonal and longer-term migration were noted to be common.*** Youth were mentioned as the most common demographic who migrates (young men and women aged 17-30, according to several respondents), though migration by more elderly individuals and entire families was not uncommon. Men and women alike were noted to commonly take younger children with them. In some cases, minor children aged 15-17 were also discussed as leaving on their own. Entire families leaving was also reported as common in some areas, often with the husband leaving first and later followed by wife and children.

***As for the ACS-USAID sample, the two strong negative effects of this migration that were highlighted nearly universally among ACCESS to Markets respondents were disintegration of families and loss of the local agricultural workforce.*** At the same time, longer-term or permanent migration to places like Spain or the United States was seen to improve the local economy through remittances sent to extended family members who had remained in the area, although the reach of these positive impacts was seen as more limited.

*“Elders, families with children, children, everyone’s leaving here.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Men Agricultural Production FGD)*

*“At least 40 percent or 50 percent of the population has already left”... “Yes, here in this village half of the people have already left.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Men Agricultural Production FGD)*

*“The people who leave most are the people who don’t have an opportunity, when they don’t get a job. That’s the people who say ‘I’m leaving because I’m not doing anything here, I’m wasting my time’.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Male Government Stakeholder KII)*

***The underlying reasons why people migrate in the ACCESS to Markets areas were overwhelmingly seen as lack of employment or related opportunities and the generally poor economic situation of the area.***

This was strongly noted in each of the FGDs held across the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample. Some respondents discussed the daily rate paid for day laborers on coffee farms, of 100 or 150 lempiras per day, as too low to be able to sustain a living even as people recognized that coffee producers are not able to pay more than this. In other cases, respondents spoke of individuals who had taken out loans but were overwhelmed by debt because production was not profitable or they lost their harvest. In those cases, people had decided to leave in search of opportunities to help pay off their debts. In one FGD and a small number of village-level KIIs, respondents also mentioned violence and insecurity in their area as another reason people leave, together with general corruption and mismanagement.

*“They cannot find a job. They can have a degree and go to the companies to search for jobs but they do not find them. They do not want to work in a microenterprise and earn a small salary because they want more.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Women Processors/value-added FGD)*

*“In the rural area, there is migration because youth and women have lack of opportunities and support. Many women go to Spain; there she can find a job, in the issue of young people. For example, the father is doing badly with the agriculture and coffee growing so they look for better options in the United States. The problem is [also] that there are many professionals that cannot find a job, right. The other problem is that coffee [prices] is falling and the ones with farms are in debt and do not have the opportunity to pay workers. Imagine someone like M4 with a boss that pays him L.150.00 per day [even if] he is in [named] cooperative. But there are many people that earn less. ... There are many people that spend weeks or months and do not get L.10 to eat, so many people migrate because of the lack of opportunities, but also the lack of support small producers do not receive and people do not believe in the small producers. Why? Many of us produce cabbage, peppers, avocado or any other crop. What happens? The coyotes, intermediaries screw us with the prices, so we end up in disappointment. ¿Why is there less corn and beans in the area. Almost no one wants to sow beans and corn; they rather buy [it] in the market in Bárbara with L.500 because what we produce at the moment is not valued. That is why people are migrating, because of the lack of opportunities, support for the small producer and steady market. And my partner recommended not giving loans, but I think with soft loans and knowing how to invest then it can work. This is concerning because if you make a diagnose here in the community for the last months or last year, many people or household heads are leaving the communities and leaving their children with a parent or a relative and that represents a problem for us in the community because of the family disintegration or society.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Women Agricultural Production FGD)*

*“We’re almost in slavery here, in this country. We don’t have all the rights we should have as citizens from the government’s behalf. We aren’t benefited, the mismanagement of the country and the corruption lead the funds elsewhere, to other sectors and it shouldn’t be like this, they should be for the citizens of the country and we don’t know where those funds are. So instead of supporting the small producer, of supporting women and all that with projects, they don’t do it. And if they do, it’s just with a small group [of people], and all those factors make us look for opportunities [elsewhere]. That’s why many people migrate, or maybe due to the violence in the country, because young guys say “we don’t do anything here” or they say “I’m going to leave because I’m not doing anything with my life here, it’s really hard here, I can’t produce, I can’t sell things”. That’s the opinion of the people, even if we don’t migrate, we know that for our children. If I didn’t have my children I’d migrate.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Female Village-level Beneficiary KII)*

**Seasonal or temporary migration related to the coffee harvest was also reported to be common throughout the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample.** Some KIIs viewed this simply as part of the culture of the area, and noted that entire families often leave during the harvest season (generally from November to February) to obtain income cutting coffee elsewhere. Government health and nutrition stakeholders viewed this type of temporary migration to negatively impact children’s nutrition, primarily through changes in quality and quantity of food that young children receive while out with their mothers during long harvest days, but they also recognized it as an economic necessity for such families.

**In terms of the effects of migration on communities, the main concerns expressed among the ACCESS to Markets respondents were: disintegration of the family due to the long separation of family members, which was mentioned in nearly all of the ACCESS to Markets FGDs, loss of the local agricultural workforce with related impacts on production, and lower school enrollment in the area due to a reduced school population.** Disintegration of families was seen as highly problematic and strongly negative for the future of communities, but at the same time a necessary evil due to the lack of opportunities in their areas. Reduced workforce in the area was also observed as a key negative effect of migration from ACCESS to Markets areas. Some respondents highlighted labor shortages in the area, particularly for coffee producers, as a result of men leaving, and increased workloads for more elderly people who had stayed behind. In one men’s FGD from Ocotepeque, respondents mentioned migrant workers from El Salvador and Guatemala now coming

to the area to fill labor gaps during coffee harvest season. In some FGDs, loss of population in the area due to migration was also seen to impact product sales among ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries, by reducing local demand for products.

Many respondents expressed concerns over the risks and dangers that individuals who attempt to migrate to the United States face along the journey, and it was noted that some who attempt to migrate lose their lives in the process. However, some positive effects of this type of longer-term migration were also noted, stemming from remittances received from those who had managed to stay abroad. Despite the many risks and negative effects associated with this type of longer-term migration, respondents pointed to improvements in the local economy and the ability for families to live “with dignity” due to improved economic situations, if their family members are able to reach the United States. This was seen as enabling the remaining family to improve their homes, buy land, and improve the local economy in general. Families who receive remittances from relatives abroad were also viewed as paying better wages to local workers (for example, to those involved in home construction) because of their improved financial situation.

*“There’s another impact that migration’s causing; family disintegration, they disintegrate completely and don’t recover.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Men Agricultural Production FGD)*

*“Yes, the biggest problem is the coffee cut. Most people leave so there is no workforce left to cut the coffee and to clean the farms. All those who helped us work went to México, United States. Others go to San Pedro looking for jobs because it is getting very complicated here.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Men Processors/value-added FGD)*

*“There’s an impact. Do you know why? Because the young people’s workforce leaves too, those of us who are adults are left alone, because our children can’t help. Because we don’t have ways to employ them, we don’t have the capacity, so that’s also an impact - youth is leaving, they are leaving, young people.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Agricultural Production and Nutrition FGD)*

**Temporary or seasonal migration around the coffee harvest was seen to have some direct negative effects on achieving ACCESS to Markets objectives.** In other cases, respondents mentioned that loss of family members who migrate seasonally or permanently can affect beneficiary households’ ability to fully realize gains from ACCESS to Markets assistance – for example, a situation in which the households risk loss of their harvest because they no longer have the required labor available in the family. In addition, nutrition objectives were also seen to be more challenging to achieve, while tracking is also disrupted due to loss of the target population during that time. As one nutrition and health stakeholder said:

*“In the coffee season, yes. During that time all the indicators go down because there’s no more [people] since October...”*

*Moderator: And how do children come when they return?*

*Oh! They are malnourished because the mothers neglect them there. Because to cut more coffee they disregard their children, they don’t give them importance anymore and they carry kids there and there’s dirt in the farms and kids eat like that ... With everything we have achieved from March to October, in those three months they decrease. And what about us? We start again. There are mothers who do, but there’s a few amount of mothers who perhaps pays attention to their child during the coffee [cutting] and there are other mothers who neglect them completely. (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Government and/or other nutrition and health stakeholder KII)*

**In terms of where people migrate to, respondents in the ACCESS-Markets sample highlighted the same trends as in the ACS-USAID sample.** The key places mentioned for longer-term migration were the United States, Spain, and secondary cities in Honduras such as San Pedro Sula, Santa Rosa. For seasonal migration, respondents from FGDs held in Ocotepeque spoke of people migrating to Copán and San Marcos during the

coffee harvesting season, while respondents from FGDs in Copán discussed leaving for Ocotepeque due to poor coffee harvests in Copán last year.

*“Well, [they go to] Ocotepeque too, during coffee cut. Because for example, around these times, for example this year the cut was bad here so they go there [to Ocotepeque], because the cut is better, there are better farms, so [they go there] in order to have more income in our homes.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Women Agricultural Production FGD)*

***Has the ACCESS to Markets activity helped to reduce interest in migration? Responses from the ACCESS to Markets qualitative sample provide some indication that the activity is perceived to have helped reduce interest in migration among activity beneficiaries and more broadly, primarily by providing households with more income through expanded agricultural production and employment.***

Some respondents felt the ACCESS to Markets activity has directly helped to reduce migration in some areas. As one respondent noted, “Yes, because I look at a lot of people who are already working and are already selling their product and before it wasn’t like that.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Women Processors/value-added FGD)

Some respondents also pointed to irrigation and water access improvements in their area brought by ACCESS to Markets, together with trainings in agricultural production and crop diversification, as having been the most important for contributing to reduced migration. Again, because these interventions or activities were seen as most beneficial for improving household income.

*“Because it [irrigation] has helped us a lot. Because now there are people who have their cornfields and we had never seen a cornfield at these times. [Before], we only saw them in winter.” (ACCESS to Markets, Ocotepeque, Women Processors/value-added FGD)*

*“It’s also what the partner said precisely, that there were people who were going to work at the cloth factories in San Pedro Sula and Tegucigalpa, to many places, in the cities. But today since there’s an advantage with this project, well people tend to work here [instead]. The big producer gives employment to [others]...” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Men Agricultural Production FGD)*

*“When the irrigation systems and the trainings were implemented in the families of the community, they saw the potential the community had and that it isn’t necessary to go to other places to do this stuff. So that’s when the families said that working and taking action [here], they can achieve, they can support their family, so that was when the migration was reduced.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male Government Stakeholder KII)*

*“Where there is production people do not move. People move because they are hungry. If USAID support us to work the land with our peasants there will be no migration, especially in the rural areas. The cities are not for us.” (ACCESS to Markets, Copán, Male Government Stakeholder KII)*

***Some respondents made recommendations on what ACCESS to Markets could do additionally, to contribute more towards reducing migration in the communities the activity works in. The most common suggestion was to involve young people more directly in the project, for example by involving the children of project beneficiaries in trainings, so they also have improved knowledge and a stronger skills base to draw on.*** Some government stakeholders also reinforced the value of the ACCESS to Markets activity, highlighting that the goals of the activity and focus on improving the lives and livelihoods of producers, increasing their job and income opportunities such as through the irrigation projects brought by the activity, are important ways to reduce the desire to migrate.

*“Training guys, mainly because most young people don’t study, so they need training too. Only adults get training majorly, young people are left outside, they aren’t invited directly, they aren’t summoned for a talk or for a training to do something or to produce something. All that hasn’t happened, most young people here work wherever they are sought or work in their father’s land, but they don’t have advice.” (ACCESS to Markets, Santa Bárbara, Female Village-level Beneficiary KII).*

***Is there evidence that ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries have (permanently) migrated out of the activity area in large numbers?*** Respondents indicated that ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries do migrate seasonally (temporary migration), but in general respondents reported that activity beneficiaries had not migrated permanently in large numbers.

### Conclusions Related to Migration

- Out-migration, both seasonal and permanent, was widely noted to leave smaller populations in communities in both of the FtF activity areas. Many respondents expressed concern for the availability of labor and the working population in their communities, if the migration trend should continue.
- The perceived effects of migration on communities are mostly negative, with family disintegration and loss of the local agricultural workforce as the top two concerns.
- The main reason that people migrate was overwhelmingly cited as lack of economic opportunities in their home communities.
- By improving economic conditions of households, FtF activities may have dissuaded some people in communities from migrating.
- Beneficiaries and stakeholder recommendations for activities that could be promoted to more effectively reduce migration include adding an explicit focus on youth and providing additional support to diversify and expand economic opportunities in communities.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the evaluation findings and conclusions, the evaluation team makes the following cross-cutting recommendations to USAID. These recommendations are aimed to contribute towards USAID strategy and programming for activities that aim to use integrated agricultural production and investment, health and nutrition synergies to improve poverty alleviation and malnutrition.

### 6.1 USAID

**Sustained improvements in household poverty status may require additional support and longer time frames beyond the 5-year lifetime of the FtF activities, however maintaining a focus on improved agricultural production, quality and lowering barriers to market engagement appears to be appropriate for achieving FtF poverty reduction objectives.** The sum of evaluation evidence suggests that beneficiary households for the FtF activities did achieve improvements in poverty status during 2015-2018: during this period, additional years of exposure to the FtF activity was associated with a higher likelihood of households moving above the poverty line or into a higher income category. The analysis also shows that each of the FtF activities appear to be meeting their achievement targets with respect to moving households into higher income categories. Support for income improvements through an agricultural production focus appears to be more impactful than small business development and processing activities, but could also

relate to the greater activity focus on the agricultural component by implementing partners. Understanding the reasons for this would require more targeted effort beyond the available data for this evaluation.

**To obtain greater gains on income and asset accumulation through the FtF activity approach, future planning of FtF activities should consider looking for synergies with other activities that also aim to reduce key market constraints and improve transport infrastructure.** The evaluation found some evidence for changes in asset growth of capital investments, although households tend to use additional income gains primarily to manage economic shocks and cover household expenses. This could be indicative of initial steps out of poverty, and it is possible that additional investments may occur once households are able to meet initial household needs. Results also suggest continued major impediments to market entry and marketing of increased production, including poor transport infrastructure and high costs of inputs required to achieve for production increases. For future planning and activity investments, FtF may want to consider prioritizing synergies with other activities that also aim to help reduce these constraints.

**To increase gender balance in gains, FtF may should consider gender differentiation in advising on management of income gains for beneficiaries.** The evaluation found improvements in women's economic empowerment but little evidence for change in women's ownerships of assets. Qualitative results also suggest that while improvements in quantity and quality of agricultural production were obtained by men and women, the use of additional income appears to be differentially channeled by gender of the income manager, with men more focused on productive investments and women focused more on household needs.

**To obtain greater effectiveness and household economic gains from irrigation project investments, consider focusing additional efforts on institutional issues, including water use right negotiations, water management committee functioning, and increasing household access to additional water sources.** The evaluation found that beneficiaries had a strongly positive view of impacts of drip irrigation and irrigation system improvements on agricultural yields, quality and income. But, results also point to substantial persisting challenges in the pathway from improved irrigation system access and infrastructure to household economic gains in agriculture. These bottlenecks appear to be primarily around institutional issues, such as water use right negotiations and committee functioning, together with insufficient funding in the system to maintain it over the longer term. Generation and management of sufficient revenue to fund water system maintenance is a critical enough concern of respondents to merit recommendation of increased FtF attention in future.

**Consider investing in rigorous impact evaluation designs to obtain stronger, more nuanced and more reliable learning on impacts to beneficiaries of FtF activity programming.** The learning questions put forth by USAID for this evaluation are highly relevant and important for understanding how FtF activities can better achieve sustained improvements on household poverty alleviation and nutrition objectives. However, the data available for this evaluation to answer these questions comes from data curated by IPs, and originates from a household sampling and survey design that IPs designed for their own M&E purposes. Understandably, these data were not designed specifically to answer these important broader learning questions, and ultimately the evaluation team found that the data were unable to provide nuanced analysis to rigorously inform on several of the learning questions. In addition, the absence of a control group of households in such a survey effort, which could serve as a counterfactual, also presents substantial limitations for the extent to which the econometric analysis can attribute any observed positive changes among beneficiary households in the sample directly to the FtF activities. For future such efforts, USAID should consider investing in rigorous impact evaluation approaches to measure program impacts, that draw on independent third-party data collection and would enable the use of household survey and sampling designs, including counterfactual populations, that are specifically aimed to rigorously answer these broader impact-level questions.



## ANNEX I ADDITIONAL SUMMARY DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF HOUSEHOLDS AT BASELINE

Table 23: Descriptive Characteristics of the ACCESS to Markets Analysis Sample at Baseline

| Characteristics                                   | Overall  | Poverty level=1 | Poverty level =2 | Poverty level =3 | Poverty level = 4 |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Age of client (years)                             | 45.913   | 45.608          | 46.563           | 44.036           | 47.089            |
| Male client                                       | 0.166    | 0.159           | 0.183            | 0.163            | 0.173             |
| Years of education of client (years) <sup>a</sup> | 3.375    | 3.243           | 3.100            | 3.663            | 3.909             |
| At least one member has wage income               | 0.443    | 0.552           | 0.450            | 0.407            | 0.112             |
| Household size (number of members)                | 4.755    | 5.159           | 4.528            | 4.058            | 4.005             |
| Number of children under 5                        | 0.577    | 0.682           | 0.483            | 0.477            | 0.381             |
| Owns their house                                  | 0.920    | 0.914           | 0.900            | 0.907            | 0.964             |
| Have access to piped water                        | 0.247    | 0.250           | 0.256            | 0.256            | 0.228             |
| Asset index <sup>b</sup>                          | -0.031   | -0.120          | -0.041           | 0.028            | 0.229             |
| Owns their land ( <i>dominio pleno</i> )          | 0.784    | 0.771           | 0.756            | 0.849            | 0.822             |
| Uses drip irrigation                              | 0.067    | 0.067           | 0.044            | 0.093            | 0.076             |
| Household crop income (\$)                        | 1267.861 | 474.551         | 1137.100         | 1643.203         | 3715.024          |
| Household off-farm income (\$)                    | 1189.290 | 652.362         | 1116.350         | 1168.283         | 2944.027          |
| Household livestock income (\$)                   | 456.078  | 188.680         | 346.998          | 448.507          | 1456.090          |
| Household income per capita per day (\$)          | 1.792    | 0.664           | 1.495            | 2.087            | 5.462             |
| Access to credit <sup>c</sup>                     | 0.395    | 0.354           | 0.439            | 0.407            | 0.477             |
| Whether women are involved in crop decision       | 0.541    | 0.545           | 0.517            | 0.558            | 0.543             |
| Whether women are involved in livestock decision  | 0.589    | 0.593           | 0.633            | 0.628            | 0.523             |
| Transferred from USAID-ACCESO <sup>d</sup>        | 0.812    | 0.793           | 0.779            | 0.889            | 0.878             |
| Sample size                                       | 1079     | 616             | 180              | 86               | 197               |

Note: Entries in the table are percentages unless indicated otherwise.

\*\*\*/\*\*/\* Statistically significant at the 0.01/0.05/0.1 level.

<sup>a</sup> Years of education data is only available for interviewees. In 80.68 percent of the cases, the interviewees were clients.

<sup>b</sup> Asset index is calculated as a standardized value combining ownership of livestock.

<sup>c</sup> Access to credit is defined as at least one household member having been able to take a loan.

<sup>d</sup> Percentage of households transferred from ACCESO is calculated based on the survey question regarding the status of the interviewee to which the interviewee could either answer “transferred from ACCESO”, “participant”, or “other”. Here, we consider a household transferred from ACCESO if they indicated that as their status during the survey. Note that the interviewee is not always the client. As indicated above, in 80.68 percent of the cases, the interviewees were clients. Also, for ACCESS to Markets, status is only available for the 2015 cohort. We did not have data on the status of the interviewee from the baseline dataset of the 2016 and the 2017 cohorts. The numbers presented here are based on the 2015 cohort only for a total sample size of 499.

Table 24: Descriptive Characteristics of the ACS-USAID Analysis Sample at Baseline

| Characteristics                                   | Total    | Poverty level=1 | Poverty level =2 | Poverty level =3 | Poverty level = 4 |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Age of client (years)                             | 45.007   | 44.909          | 44.798           | 46.408           | 44.846            |
| Male client                                       | 0.213    | 0.216           | 0.175            | 0.157            | 0.268             |
| Years of education of client (years) <sup>a</sup> | 4.080    | 3.971           | 4.215            | 4.190            | 4.432             |
| At least one member has wage income               | 0.513    | 0.571           | 0.556            | 0.410            | 0.246             |
| Household size (number of members)                | 5.022    | 5.559           | 4.389            | 4.000            | 3.529             |
| Number of children under 5                        | 0.689    | 0.817           | 0.484            | 0.482            | 0.355             |
| Owens their house                                 | 0.935    | 0.932           | 0.960            | 0.880            | 0.964             |
| Asset index <sup>b</sup>                          | 0.000    | -0.077          | -0.002           | 0.169            | 0.291             |
| Owens their land ( <i>dominio pleno</i> )         | 0.650    | 0.643           | 0.595            | 0.663            | 0.725             |
| Uses drip irrigation                              | 0.117    | 0.109           | 0.135            | 0.120            | 0.138             |
| Household crop income (\$)                        | 795.015  | 441.426         | 886.208          | 1212.538         | 2266.756          |
| Household off-farm income (\$)                    | 1185.777 | 697.208         | 1325.237         | 1586.906         | 3260.028          |
| Household livestock income (\$)                   | 276.595  | 165.952         | 234.380          | 430.080          | 751.460           |
| Household income per capita per day (\$)          | 1.408    | 0.619           | 1.492            | 2.089            | 4.863             |
| Access to credit <sup>c</sup>                     | 0.274    | 0.277           | 0.246            | 0.265            | 0.290             |
| Whether women are involved in crop decision       | 0.606    | 0.610           | 0.635            | 0.542            | 0.594             |
| Whether women are involved in livestock decision  | 0.531    | 0.526           | 0.595            | 0.494            | 0.522             |
| Transferred from USAID-ACCESO                     | 0.473    | 0.477           | 0.437            | 0.602            | 0.406             |
| Sample size                                       | 1037     | 690             | 126              | 83               | 138               |

Table 25: Changes in Average Unadjusted Per Capita Daily Income (US\$) from Baseline, by Income Categories (ACCESS to Markets)

| Per capita daily income (X) categories | Baseline Average | Regression adjusted average predicted income after program exposure | Percentage change from baseline |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| $X < \$1.25$                           | \$0.66           | \$1.72                                                              | 160.6%                          |
| $\$1.25 \leq X < \$1.81$               | \$1.49           | \$2.26                                                              | 51.4%                           |
| $\$1.81 \leq X < \$2.42$               | \$2.09           | \$2.73                                                              | 36.6%                           |

Table 26: Changes in Average Unadjusted Per Capita Daily Income (US\$) from Baseline, by Income Categories (ACS-USAID)

| Per capita daily income (X) categories | Baseline Average | Regression adjusted average predicted income after program exposure | Percentage change from baseline |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| $X < \$1.25$                           | \$0.62           | \$1.57                                                              | 154.5%                          |
| $\$1.25 \leq X < \$1.81$               | \$1.49           | \$2.24                                                              | 50.5%                           |
| $\$1.81 \leq X < \$2.42$               | \$2.09           | \$3.34                                                              | 59.5%                           |

## **ANNEX II QUALITATIVE INSTRUMENTS**

# MONITORING AND EVALUATION SUPPORT FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND ADAPTING (MESCLA) ACTIVITY

Performance Evaluation of ACS-USAID and ACCESS to Markets FtF  
Activities in Honduras:

Phase I Qualitative Instruments: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key  
Informant Interview (KII) Guides

Version of:

18 January 2019

Prepared by:

NORC at the University of Chicago, for Dexis Consulting Group

## INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT

*The Moderator should read the following consent script prior to the start of the group discussion:*

Hello and thank you for agreeing to talk to me. My name is (interviewer's name) \_\_\_\_\_ and here is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_ who will take notes during the conversation. We work for a research organization called ESA Consultores. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) commissioned us to conduct a study to evaluate how programs in this area have helped people in your community.

The purpose of this discussion is to understand how the assistance from USAID and their technical staff have changed your production practices and outcomes. The discussion will last about 90 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to share your experiences, both positive and negative -what has worked for you and what has not -, and to give examples to illustrate what you are saying. Everyone will have a chance to speak, and we ask that you do not interrupt anyone when they are speaking.

Our role here is to ask questions and listen to your opinions and experiences. We will record this discussion in order to accurately record the contents of the conversation, and not to forget anything that has been said. Your identities will not be disclosed. The information that will be collected through this discussion will be kept safe and considered confidential, it will only be shared with USAID anonymously – your name will never appear.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose not to answer a question or stop your participation at any time. Your contribution is very important to help USAID make its programs in Honduras more effective and we appreciate it greatly.

Do you have any questions? **[START THE RECORDER TO GET VERBAL CONSENT]**

Do you agree to participate in today's discussion?

**[IF YES, CONTINUE DISCUSSION]**

May we begin?

***[Facilitator: Remember to fill out the FG participant form and note-taking form for each GD conducted].***

## GD Participant Registration Form:

### Respondent Category:

- ☐ (1) Agricultural production HH (Women);  
☐ (2) Agricultural production HH (Men);  
☐ (3) Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Women);  
☐ (4) Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Men);  
☐ (5) Processors/value-added HH (Women);  
☐ (6) Processors/value-added HH (Men)

Moderator: \_\_\_\_\_

Note-taker: \_\_\_\_\_

Start time: \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ AM/PM (circle one)

End time: \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ AM/PM (circle one)

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Municipality and Town Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: Month: \_\_\_\_ Day: \_\_\_\_ 2019

| Participant | Main Occupation<br>(farmer, shopkeeper, teacher, etc) | Gender<br>(M/F) | Age | Ethnic Group | Marital Status (Married,<br>Single, Widowed, Separated,<br>Divorced) | Education level completed |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 2.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 3.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 4.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 5.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 6.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 7.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 8.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 9.          |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 10.         |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 11.         |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 12.         |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |
| 13.         |                                                       |                 |     |              |                                                                      |                           |

Comments on any aspect of the GD:

## GD PROTOCOL #1: PRODUCTION / NUTRITION & HEALTH ACTIVITIES

This guide should be used for the following respondent categories: (1) Agricultural production HH (Women); (2) Agricultural production HH (Men); (3) Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Women); and (4) Agricultural production/nutrition HH (Men).

### A. INTRODUCTION

1. Do you know this project? Is ACS/ACCESS to Markets the name by which you call it?
  - a. *By what name do you call the project in this community?*
  - b. *Can you briefly describe your participation in the project?*
2. What types of training and/or assistance did you receive through the project? [e.g., good agricultural practices, irrigation practices, livestock or poultry production, agricultural production, hygiene, diet, food introduction, potable water, healthy recipes, access to credit, gender, leadership, masculinities, etc.]

### B. IMPACT

Now we will discuss in detail the project activities, how these activities affected your quality of life, and your general impressions. For each subject, I want your opinion on the project activities that have most helped your household and community, and what are the reasons.

#### **Production & Access to Markets**

First, we will discuss project activities related to agricultural production and access to markets.

3. Has the project led to changes in your farming or livestock (or other farm animals) production practices? If yes, what type of changes and what was responsible for these changes? If not, why?
  - a. Do you grow new or different crops, or new varieties of traditional crops? (Why or why not? If yes, which ones?)
  - b. Do you use new inputs, like seeds or fertilizer that you did not use before? (Why or why not? If yes, which ones?)
  - c. Are you implementing new agricultural technologies or practices on a consistent basis? (Why or why not? If yes, how so?)
  - d. Do you breed new types of animals? (Why or why not? If yes, which ones?)
  - e. Has the quality of your agricultural products increased?
  - f. Do you plan to continue using all the practices that you implemented as result of your participation in the project? (If no, which ones will be dropped? Why?)
  - g. What challenges continue to exist regarding agriculture in your community?
4. Have you noticed any changes in the productivity or income of your household's crops as a result of adopting any of the technologies or practices promoted by the project?
  - a. [IF YES:] Which crops benefitted from these new practices?
  - b. [IF YES:] What new technologies or practices led to the greatest improvement?
  - c. [IF NO CHANGES OR BENEFITS IDENTIFIED:] Why?
5. Have you noticed any changes in the health and productivity or income from your household's livestock or other farm animals as a result of adopting any of the technologies or practices promoted by the project?
  - a. [IF YES:] Which animals benefitted from these new practices?
  - b. [IF YES:] What new technologies or practices led to the greatest improvement?

- c. [IF NO CHANGES OR BENEFITS IDENTIFIED:] Why?
6. Were there any farming or livestock (or other farm animals) practices promoted by the project that households in your community did not want or could not practice? (Which ones? Why?)
7. Were there any techniques that households in your community wanted to be trained on that were not covered by project activities? (Which techniques?)
8. Has the project led to changes in access to water for your crops or animals? If yes, what was responsible for the changes? If not, why?
  - a. Did the project make improvements to the irrigation system in your community? What kind of improvements were made? What has been the effect of this improved access to water, on your crop and livestock/animal production specifically? On other household activities and overall?
  - b. Have drip irrigation systems been installed in your community? To what extent do you think your community can address any issues that arise with these irrigation improvements established by the project?
  - c. What are the key challenges you experience for managing and using water in this community?
  - d. Does your community have a system to govern how water is used for agriculture and livestock/animal production in your community? How does this system work?
  - e. Do you currently pay for water used for irrigation purposes? To whom? [NOTE TO MODERATOR: People in project areas may pay for potable water as well as water used for irrigation, so please ensure they are answering about water for irrigation services.]
9. Has the project led to any changes in your access to markets to sell your products? If yes, for which products? What was responsible for the changes? If not, why?
  - a. Have you changed / expanded to new markets where you sell your products? (Why or why not? If yes, where do you now sell?)
  - b. Have the prices that buyers pay you for your products changed? Why or why not?
  - c. Have you started any new agreements with buyers who promise to purchase your products? (If yes, are those verbal agreements or written contracts?)
  - d. Who is responsible for selling agricultural products in your households? And for managing the proceeds? (men or women?)
  - e. Have you become a member of any producer organizations selling products to large-scale buyers (e.g., supermarkets, restaurants or processors in big cities)? If yes, has membership helped you improve the selling of your agricultural products and/or your income?
  - f. To what extent is your household involved in providing crop or animal products for local schools, community centers or local processors? Are these products provided on a regular basis?
  - g. What challenges continue to exist in relation to finding new markets for your crops or animal products?

### **Women's Empowerment**

#### **WEAI Domain I - Production**

10. In your household, who makes decisions about production – you, your partner, or a combination?
  - a. What types of production related decisions do you make? What types does your partner make?
  - b. What happens if you disagree?
  - c. [WOMEN ONLY:] To what extent can women make decisions about production activities if they want to?
  - d. Has who makes decisions about production changed since the beginning of the project?

- e. What limits women's input in production decision-making?

WEAI Domain 5 - Time

11. [WOMEN ONLY:] Did the project introduce any activities that save time or labor during production?
- a. Which project activities have been particularly useful in saving you time or labor?
  - b. Were there any project activities that were supposed to save you time or labor but did not end up doing so? What was responsible for that?
  - c. Who decides how women spend their time on farms?
  - d. How satisfied are you with the amount of free time you have for leisure activities?

WEAI Domain 2 - Resources

12. Who owns the land belonging to your household? The animals? The farming or processing equipment?
- a. Has ownership over any of these assets changed since the beginning of the project?
  - b. If new assets have been acquired with assistance of the project, who has ownership over them?
  - c. What limits women's ownership over assets in your community?
13. Who makes decisions about purchasing, selling, or transferring land in your household – you, your partner, or a combination?
14. Have there been any changes in your household's access to credit as a result of project activities? If yes, what was responsible for the changes? If not, why?
- a. What are the main reasons that people in this community want to access credit?
  - b. Which project activities have been most useful in increasing access to credit?
  - c. What limits access to credit?
  - d. Are the challenges different for women?
  - e. Are the challenges different for indigenous people?
  - f. Are the challenges different for youth? How about young women in particular?

WEAI Domain 3 - Income

15. Who makes the decisions about how to spend money in your household – you, your partner, or a combination?
- a. What types of financial decisions do you make? What types does your partner make?
  - b. What happens if you disagree?
  - c. Has who makes decisions about how to spend money changed since the beginning of the project?
  - d. What limits women's involvement in financial decision-making?

WEAI Domain 4 - Leadership

16. [WOMEN ONLY:] What economic and social groups are you a part of?
- a. Are you or were you part of a farmers group?
  - b. Are you or were you part of a caja rural?
  - c. Are you or were you part of a community water board or any other civil society organization in your community?
  - d. How are these groups beneficial to you?

- e. Are there any groups you would like to join but could not? What are the reasons or challenges to joining?

17. Does your community hold meetings to discuss different issues or decisions?

- a. How do women participate in these meetings? Do women in this community feel they can share their ideas?
- b. Has the project led to any changes in the way women participate? For example, do women feel more confident to share their opinions or propose new ideas in public?
- c. Have any project activities been particularly useful in changing the way women participate?
- d. What limits women's participation in community meetings?
- e. Do indigenous women face different limitations?

### **Nutrition & Health**

Now, we will discuss project activities related to nutrition and health.

18. How many of you have attended a training at a Nutritional Training Center? [**Moderator: Record count = \_\_\_\_\_**]

- a. Please describe the Nutritional Training Center.
- b. When was it established?
- c. What did you do there? How often did you use this center?
- d. Has the Nutritional Training Center been beneficial to you? If yes, in which way? If no, why?
- e. What challenges did you experience in implementing the training you received from the Nutritional Training Center?
- f. How can the Nutritional Training Center be improved?

19. How many of you have established a household plot (household vegetable garden) through project support? [**Moderator: Record count = \_\_\_\_\_**]

- a. What kinds of foods do you grow in your household plot?
- b. What challenges did you encounter establishing your household plot, if any? Are there any challenges that continue to exist?
- c. Are you able to harvest from your household plot throughout the year?
- d. How has the establishment of a household plot impacted your household's diet and the kinds of meals that you eat?

20. Have project activities helped your household have a **more diverse and nourishing diet**?

- a. [IF YES:] Which activities have been particularly useful in having diverse and nutritional foods to eat?
- b. Which activities were the least useful?
- c. Does your household prepare meals differently from those you prepared before the project began working in this area? Do you use different foods now? Which ones, specifically?
- d. Do you use a specific / different diet for any pregnant women in your household? What about for babies and young children? What about for adolescent girls? (If so, what does it consist of?)
- e. Have project activities changed the diversity and quality of food at your children's schools?
- f. Who makes decisions about the food your household eats – you, your spouse or partner, or a combination?
- g. What challenges continue to exist in relation to your household's access to a variety of nutritious foods available?

21. Has the project led to changes in your household's access to potable water? If yes, what was responsible for the changes? If not, why?

- a. *Has the project helped you to establish a water connection in your home, or other specific improvements for how you obtain drinking water in your household?*
  - b. *Has the project done any other activities in your household or in the community that have been particularly useful in improving your access to potable water?*
  - c. *How has this impacted your household's health?*
  - d. *How has this impacted the amount of time women and children spend collecting water?*
  - e. *What challenges continue to exist regarding access to potable water in your household and in your community in general?*
22. Have project activities led to changes in sanitation and hygiene practices for you and other members of your households? If yes, what was responsible for the changes? If not, why?
- a. *Which activities have been particularly useful in improving your sanitation and hygiene practices?*
  - b. *How well have other members of your household adopted these practices?*
  - c. *How has this impacted your household's health?*
  - d. *What challenges continue to exist regarding improvements to sanitation and hygiene?*
23. Has the project led to any other home improvements for you? If yes, which ones?
- a. *How have home improvements impacted your household's health?*
  - b. *Have home improvements benefited your household in any other way?*
  - c. *What challenges continue to exist regarding home improvements made during the project?*
24. Have home visits from project staff been beneficial in improving nutrition and health in your household? If yes, in which way?
- a. *What challenges did you experience in implementing recommendations from home visits by project staff?*
  - b. *How can home visits be improved?*

### **C. RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Now, we will discuss how this project may or may not have helped you prepare for the future.

25. Has your household generated more income as a result of the project?
- a. *Which project activities have been the most useful in increasing your household income overall?*
  - b. *Your agricultural income? Your non-agricultural income?*
  - c. *What challenges continue to exist for increasing non-agricultural income in your household?*
26. How does your household use any additional income generated as a result of the project?
- a. *Have you reinvested in your home, farm or a business (MSMEs) as a result of this project? In which ways?*
27. How does your household deal with unexpected expenses when they arise? Is your strategy different from before the project?
- a. *What types of unexpected expenses are you concerned about?*
  - b. *In the past (before the project) when you've experienced such events, what are the ways that your household has recovered to your usual condition? Which types of activities were most important to help you recover?*
  - c. *Have any project activities helped you feel more prepared to deal with unexpected expenses? If yes, which activities?*

- d. Is the way you'd deal with unexpected expenses different now than before the project started? Please provide specific examples.
28. Sometimes producers can have a bad year because of extreme weather events like droughts, floods, heat waves, or strong winds. How does your household deal with these events?
- a. What types of extreme weather events are you most concerned about?
  - b. In the past (before the project) when you've experienced such events, what are the ways that your household has recovered to your usual condition? Which types of activities were most important to help you recover?
  - c. Have any project activities helped you feel more prepared to deal with extreme weather events? If yes, which activities?
  - d. Is the way you'd deal with unexpected weather events different now than before the project started? Please provide specific examples.

#### **D. MIGRATION**

Lastly, we have a few questions about migration in this area.

29. How has migration changed the population in this area – is it gaining or losing population?
- a. Among which types of people have you seen the most change in population (e.g., school-aged population, adults, etc.)?
  - b. How is migration affecting the community?
  - c. [IF LOSING POPULATION:] Where do people go? Please give examples.

#### **E. CLOSING**

30. Is there anything else you would like to add to what we have discussed today?

Thank you – this concludes our discussion today. I have learned a lot and I thank you very much for your participation. Before leaving, do you have any questions for me?

## GD PROTOCOL #2: PROCESSING/VALUE-ADDED ACTIVITIES

***This guide should be used for the following respondent categories: (5) Processors/value-added HH (Women); (6) Processors/value-added HH (Men).***

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

1. Do you know this project? Is ACS/ACCESS to Markets the name by which you call it?
  - a. *By what name do you call the project in this community?*
  - b. *Can you briefly describe your participation in the project?*
2. What types of training and/or assistance did you receive through the project? [e.g., good manufacturing practices, record-keeping, sourcing raw materials, business registration, access to credit, gender, leadership, masculinities etc.]
3. Please describe any processing group you are a part of.
  - a. *What types of products does your group focus on?*
  - b. *How was this group formed?*
  - c. *How does this group function?*
  - d. *How many women are in the group? How many men?*
    - i. *Are there more or less women in the group now than in the past? If there are less women, what's responsible for that?*

### **B. IMPACT**

Now we will discuss in detail the activities of the project, how these activities affected your quality of life, and your general impressions. For each subject, I want your opinion on the activities of the project that have most helped your household and community, and what are the reasons.

#### ***Processing & Value Addition Activities***

First, we will discuss how this project may or may not have affected your businesses.

4. Have project activities helped you expand your business? If yes, how so? If not, why not?
  - a. *Which project activities were the most useful in expanding your business?*
  - b. *Have project activities helped you to develop new products for sale? (If yes, which activities?)*
  - c. *What challenges continue to exist regarding expanding your business?*
5. Have project activities helped you improve the quality of your products through new technologies or management practices? If yes, how so? If not, why not?
  - a. *Have project activities helped you to standardize your processes? (If yes, which activities?)*
  - b. *Have project activities helped you implement good manufacturing processes? (If yes, which activities?)*
  - c. *Have project activities led to any changes in the quality of raw materials you receive?*
  - d. *Have you experienced any challenges sourcing materials from local growers?*
  - e. *How confident are you that you would be able to source quality raw materials in the future without the project's assistance?*
  - f. *What challenges continue to exist in improving the quality of your products?*
6. Were there any technologies or management practices promoted by the project that you did not want or could not implement? (Which ones? Why?)

7. Were there any techniques or new products that you wanted to be trained on that were not covered by project activities? (Which ones?)

### **Access to Markets**

8. Have project activities led to any changes in your access to markets? If yes, what was responsible for the changes? If not, why not?
- Which project activities were most useful in increasing your access to markets?
  - Have you changed / expanded where you sell your products? (Why or why not? If yes, where do you now sell?)
  - Have the prices that buyers pay you for your products changed? Why or why not?
  - What challenges continue to exist regarding finding new markets for your products?
9. Who is responsible for selling products? And for managing the proceeds in your businesses? (men or women)
10. Have project activities led to any changes in your relationships with buyers? If yes, how so? If not, why not?
- Have you started any new agreements with buyers who promise to purchase your products? (If yes, are those verbal agreements or written contracts?)
  - What challenges continue to exist in formalizing your relationships with buyers?

### **Women's Empowerment**

#### **WEAI Domain I - Production**

11. In your household, who makes decisions about production – you, your partner, or a combination?
- What types of production-related decisions do you make? What types does your partner make?
  - What happens if you disagree?
  - [WOMEN ONLY:] To what extent can women make decisions about production activities if they want to?
  - Has who makes decisions about production changed since the beginning of the project?
  - What limits women's input in production decision-making?

#### **WEI Domain 5 – Time**

12. [WOMEN ONLY:] Did the project introduce any activities that save time or labor during production?
- Which project activities have been particularly useful in saving you time or labor?
  - Were there any project activities that were supposed to save you time or labor but did not end up doing so? What was responsible for that?
  - Who decides how women spend their time on farms?
  - How satisfied are you with the amount of free time you have for leisure activities?

#### **WEAI Domain 2 – Resources**

13. Who owns the land belonging to your household? The animals? The farming or processing equipment?
- Has ownership over any of these assets changed since the beginning of the project?

- b. If new assets have been acquired with assistance of the project, who has ownership over them?
  - c. What limits women's ownership over assets in your community?
14. Who makes decisions about purchasing, selling, or transferring land in your household – you, your partner, or a combination?
15. Have there been any changes in your household's access to credit as a result of project activities? If yes, what was responsible for the changes? If not, why?
- a. What are the main reasons that people in this community want to access credit?
  - b. Which project activities have been most useful in increasing access to credit?
  - c. What limits access to credit?
  - d. Are the challenges different for women?
  - e. Are the challenges different for indigenous people?

#### WEI Domain 3 – Income

16. Who makes the decisions about how to spend money in your household – you, your partner, or a combination?
- a. What types of financial decisions do you make? What types does your partner make?
  - b. What happens if you disagree?
  - c. Has who makes decisions about how to spend money changed since the beginning of the project?
  - d. What limits women's involvement in financial decision-making?

#### WEI Domain 4 – Leadership

17. [WOMEN ONLY:] What economic and social groups are you a part of?
- a. Are you or were you part of a processing group?
  - b. Are you or were you part of a caja rural?
  - c. Are you or were you part of a community water board or any other civil society organization in your community?
  - d. How are these groups beneficial to you?
  - e. Are there any groups you would like to join but could not? What are the reasons or challenges to joining?
18. Does your community hold meetings to discuss different issues or decisions?
- a. How do women participate in these meetings? Do women in this community feel they can share their ideas?
  - b. Has the project led to any changes in the way women participate? For example, do women feel more confident to share their opinions or propose new ideas in public?
  - c. Have any project activities been particularly useful in changing the way women participate?
  - d. What limits women's participation in community meetings?
  - e. Do indigenous women face different limitations?

### **C. RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Now, we will discuss how this project may or may not have helped you prepare for the future.

19. Has your household generated more income as a result of the project?
- a. Which project activities have been the most useful in increasing your household income overall?
  - b. Your agricultural income? Your non-agricultural income?

- c. What challenges continue to exist for increasing non-agricultural income in your household?
20. How does your household use any additional income generated as a result of the project?
- a. *Have you reinvested in your home, farm or a new business as a result of this project? In which ways?*
  - b. *Have you reinvested in your business? In which ways?*
21. How does your household deal with unexpected expenses when they arise? Is your strategy different from before the project?
- a. *What types of unexpected expenses are you concerned about?*
  - b. *In the past (before the project) when you've experienced such events, what are the ways that your household has recovered to your usual condition? Which types of activities were most important to help you recover?*
  - c. Have any project activities helped you feel more prepared to deal with unexpected expenses? If yes, which activities?
  - d. Is the way you'd deal with unexpected expenses different now than before the project started? Please provide specific examples.
22. Sometimes producers can have a bad year because of extreme weather events like droughts, floods, heat waves, or strong winds. How does your household deal with these events?
- a. *What types of extreme weather events are you most concerned about?*
  - b. *In the past (before the project) when you've experienced such events, what are the ways that your household has recovered to your usual condition? Which types of activities were most important to help you recover?*
  - c. Have any project activities helped you feel more prepared to deal with extreme weather events? If yes, which activities?
  - d. Is the way you'd deal with unexpected weather events different now than before the project started? Please provide specific examples.

#### **D. MIGRATION**

Lastly, we have a few questions about migration in this area.

23. How has migration changed the population in this area – is it gaining or losing population?
- d. Among which types of people have you seen the most change in population (e.g., school-aged population, adults, etc.)?
  - e. How migration affecting the community?
  - f. [IF LOSING POPULATION:] Where do people go? Please give examples.

#### **E. CLOSING**

24. Is there anything else you would like to add to what we have discussed today?

Thank you – this concludes our discussion today. I have learned a lot and I thank you very much for your participation. Before leaving, do you have any questions for me?

## KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

### INTRODUCTION AND CONSENT

**Prior to all KIIs, the following consent statement should be read out loud to each respondent:**

Hello and thank you for agreeing to talk to me. My name is (interviewer's name) \_\_\_\_\_ and here is my colleague \_\_\_\_\_ who will take notes during the conversation. We work for a research organization called ESA Consultores. USAID commissioned us to conduct a study to evaluate how programs in this area have helped people in your community [FOR BENEFICIARIES] / in western Honduras [FOR GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS OR PROJECT STAFF].

The purpose of this discussion is to understand how the assistance from USAID and their technical staff have changed the production practices and outcomes in this region. The discussion will last about 60 minutes. There are no right or wrong answers. Please feel free to share your experiences, both positive and negative -what has worked and what has not - and to give examples to illustrate what you are saying.

Our role here is to ask questions and listen to your opinions and experiences. We will record this discussion in order to accurately record the contents of the conversation, and not to forget anything that has been said. Your identity will not be disclosed. The information that will be collected through this discussion will be kept safe and considered confidential, it will only be shared with USAID anonymously – your name will never appear.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you can choose not to answer a question or stop your participation at any time. Your contribution is very important to help USAID make its programs in Honduras more effective and we appreciate it greatly.

#### **[START THE RECORDER TO GET VERBAL CONSENT]**

Do you agree to participate in today's discussion?

#### **[IF THE RESPONDENT SAYS "YES", CONTINUE DISCUSSION]**

May we begin?

The following information should be collected for each KII respondent:

|           |                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>  | <b>Name of respondent</b>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>2</b>  | <b>Type of respondent</b>                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Village-level KIIs with beneficiaries<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other government stakeholders<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other nutrition partners<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other agricultural / value chain partners<br><input type="checkbox"/> ACCESS To Markets /ACS Activity Staff<br><input type="checkbox"/> USAID Staff |
| <b>3</b>  | <b>Agency or Institution (if applicable)</b>        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>4</b>  | <b>Respondent title or position (if applicable)</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>5</b>  | <b>Locality name</b>                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>6</b>  | <b>Date of interview</b>                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>7</b>  | <b>Interview location</b>                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>8</b>  | <b>Interviewer</b>                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>9</b>  | <b>Note taker</b>                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>10</b> | <b>Start time</b>                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>11</b> | <b>End time</b>                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>12</b> | <b>Interview duration (minutes)</b>                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>13</b> | <b>Language of interview</b>                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

## KII PROTOCOL

This guide should be used for all village-level and department-level KIIs.

### A. INTRODUCTION

1. Please briefly describe your role in the ACCESS to Markets / ACS project.
  - a. *When and how did you start working with the project?*
  - b. *[IF IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:] What type of services do you provide to project beneficiaries?*
  - c. *[IF IMPLEMENTING PARTNER:] How does your organization work with USAID/other implementing partners?*
  - d. *[IF BENEFICIARY OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT:] What other support or assistance have households in this area received from donors or the government related to agriculture? Nutrition? Access to water?*
    - i. *What types of support were received? Where did the support come from?*

### B. BENEFICIARY SELECTION

2. How were households selected to be project beneficiaries? What were the criteria?
  - a. *To what extent were households interested in joining the project?*
  - b. *Were there households that wanted to join but could not? What criteria kept them from being eligible?*
  - c. *Are there any households that have lost interest or stopped participating in project activities? What are the reasons? Is this common or unusual in this area?*

### C. IMPACT

3. In your opinion, since the project began, has agricultural productivity of beneficiaries increased? Why or why not?
  - a. *Among the various project activities, which were particularly effective in improving agricultural productivity for beneficiaries? Why?*
  - b. *Which project activities were the least effective? Why?*
  - c. *Were there any implementation challenges? How were they addressed?*
  - d. *What challenges continue to exist regarding improving agricultural productivity?*
4. In your opinion, since the project began, has market demand and access increased for beneficiaries? Why or why not?
  - a. *Which project activities were particularly effective in increasing market demand or access? Why?*
  - b. *Which project activities were the least effective? Why?*
  - c. *Were there any implementation challenges? How were they addressed?*
  - d. *What challenges continue to exist for beneficiaries when accessing markets?*
5. In your opinion, since the project began, are producers and processors generating more income? Why or why not?
  - g. *Which project activities were particularly effective in increasing the incomes of producers and processors? Why?*
  - h. *Which project activities were the least effective? Why?*
  - i. *Were there any implementation challenges? How were they addressed?*
  - j. *What challenges continue to exist regarding producers increasing their incomes?*

- k. Has the quality of agricultural products for sale changed as a result of this project?
6. In your opinion, since the project began, has access to financial services improved for beneficiaries? Why or why not?
- Which project activities were particularly effective in improving access to financial services? Why?
  - Which project activities were the least effective? Why?
  - Were there any implementation challenges? How were they addressed?
  - What challenges continue to exist for beneficiaries when accessing financial services?
7. In your opinion, since the project began, has the nutritional status of beneficiaries improved? Why or why not?
- Is it the same for pregnant women?
  - Is it the same for small children (under age 5)?
  - Which project activities were particularly effective in improving nutritional status? Why?
  - Which project activities were the least effective? Why?
  - Were there any implementation challenges? How were they addressed?
  - What challenges continue to exist for beneficiaries in improving their nutritional status?
8. Have you noticed a difference in general household wellbeing for households that received only the production intervention, compared with those that received both the production and nutrition interventions? If yes, in what ways and what are the reasons? Have you seen a difference in food consumption and levels of malnutrition for children in the household, specifically?
9. In your opinion, since the project began, has access to irrigation systems and water infrastructure improved in this community? Why or why not?
- Has household access to drip irrigation systems improved? Why or why not?
  - Which project activities do you consider to be the most effective for improving household access to irrigation systems?
  - In your opinion, which project activities were the least effective? Why?
  - Has household uptake of drip irrigation increased? Why or why not?
  - Has household use of drip irrigation improved their crop yields? If yes, has this also led to increased income for those crops? Why or why not?
  - What challenges exist regarding access to drip irrigation systems? Uptake of drip irrigation?
10. In your opinion, since the project began, have women in beneficiary households become more empowered?
- [IF YES:] How can you tell? Please give examples.
  - [IF NO:] Why not?
  - What have been the main challenges to women's empowerment in agricultural and related market-based activities?
  - Which project activities do you see as most effective for improving women's empowerment here?
11. In your opinion, since the project began, has hygiene and sanitation improved at the household level? Why or why not?
- Has it improved at the community level? Why or why not?
  - Which project activities do you consider to be the most effective for improving household hygiene and sanitation? Why?

- c. *In your opinion, which project activities were the least effective? Why?*
- d. *Were there any implementation challenges? How were they addressed?*
- e. *What challenges continue to exist for beneficiaries to improve their hygiene and sanitation conditions?*

12. [USAID ONLY:] What is your opinion on the effectiveness of the implementing partners in undertaking their activities? What were the 3-4 main challenges they had to meet? In what ways would you like to see activities improved?

#### **D. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT**

13. Overall, were there specific challenges or constraints that limited the potential results from activities implemented by the project? If so, what are they? Do you have any recommendations for how these could be overcome going forward?

#### **E. SUSTAINABILITY**

14. In your opinion, have beneficiaries received necessary training and resources and acquired sufficient knowledge to sustain some or all of the practices of the project on their own?

- a. *[IF YES:] Do you think they will be able to share what they learned with others who did not participate in the project? Why or why not?*
- b. *[IF NO:] What are the main reasons preventing beneficiaries from sustainably maintaining practices?*

15. [DO NOT ASK OF IMPLEMENTERS] Do you think that the service providers that are working with the project are motivated and have sufficient capacity to continue providing some or all of their services in project communities, once the project is completed?

16. Do you think beneficiaries will continue to ask for some or all of these services, if any?

17. Do you think beneficiaries have sufficient interest and financial means to bear some of the costs associated with these services, after the project is finished?

- a. *[IF YES:] How can you tell?*
- b. *[IF NO:] What will prevent them?*

#### **F. MIGRATION**

18. [IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS, USAID ONLY] To what extent have ACS/ACCESS to Markets beneficiaries migrated away from project areas?

- l. *What are the main reasons beneficiaries migrate away from project zones? Please give examples.*
- m. *Where do people go? Please give examples.*

19. [LOCAL GOVERNMENT ONLY] How has migration changed the population in this area – is it gaining or losing population?

- n. *Among which types of people have you seen the most change in population (e.g., school-aged population, adults, etc.)?*

- o. [IF LOSING POPULATION:] Where do people go? Please give examples.
20. [IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS, USAID ONLY] In your opinion, to what extent have project activities reduced beneficiaries' perceptions of the need to migrate to other places in Honduras? Or to places outside of Honduras?
- a. Which project activities were particularly effective in reducing the perception of the need to migrate? Why?
21. [IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS, USAID ONLY] In your opinion, to what extent will migration affect FTF achievement in your area? Why or why not? *[Moderator: If needed, give these examples: Will there be less farm labor available? Will there be fewer people to process agricultural products and get them to market? Will there be fewer people to buy the products from the zone?]*
22. What Feed the Future activities, whether new ones or those already implemented, would you suggest promote to reduce migration to other places within or outside of Honduras?

## **G. CLOSING**

23. Is there anything else you would like to add to what we have discussed today?

Thank you – this concludes our discussion today. I have learned a lot and I thank you very much for your participation. Before leaving, do you have any questions for me?