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**HONDURAS**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Change Comes To Semane

**USAID food security program helps teach a Honduras town healthy eating and farming**

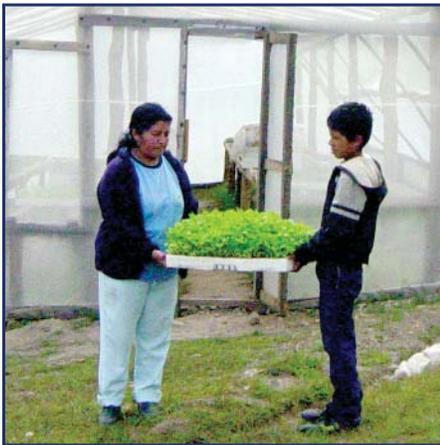


Photo: CARE

Sabina Vasquez at a USAID program nursery showing diversified crop seedlings

***“The USAID program is the founder of Semane’s development,” said Isidro Lorenzo, school principal in Semane.***

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Sabina Vasquez remembers that as a child, the only food in her home was a piece of tortilla, a pinch of salt, and a few beans to mitigate her hunger. Sabina is now a middle-aged woman, mother of three children, and housewife. She is also treasurer of a local community bank and a recognized leader. She lives in Semane, Intibuca, one of the poorest and least developed areas of Honduras, which has benefited in recent years from a USAID program aimed at ensuring food security and nutrition for Semane residents.

Originally, the Semane community was made up of subsistence corn and bean farmers. The USAID program transformed the region’s farming and food production by introducing a diversity of high-market-value products such as citrus fruits and vegetables. Farmers also improved yields through implementation of new agricultural techniques learned from the program. The program not only changed Semane’s landscape, it also changed the community’s way of thinking. Community members are now involved in the protection of water resources and reforestation.

“Before, we thought the land was useless; instead of taking care of it, we destroyed it by burning our fields. Now we know about organic agriculture,” said Nemesio Manueles, a local farmer.

In addition to environmental and agricultural improvements, the USAID program has helped reduce malnutrition in Semane’s youngest residents. Marta Mejia, a health volunteer, teaches women how basic nutritional information can empower them. “With the program, women have learned to prepare food in many different ways. Their children have improved their weight, something that until recently was impossible to achieve,” she said.

“The USAID program is the founder of Semane’s development,” said Semane’s school principal, Isidro Lorenzo. Lorenzo said that unlike other programs, USAID has organized, educated, and provided the population with skills, dignity, and hope. “The program has taught us to value work,” he said.