



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



# *45th Anniversary*



*“A healthy population is indispensable for a developing country”*



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**Message from the United States  
Ambassador to Honduras, Charles A. Ford**



In 1961, President John F. Kennedy created the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which in the year 2006, is celebrating 45 years of continual support to Honduras.

USAID, as part of the mission of the United States Embassy, brings technical assistance to countries combating poverty, executing democratic reforms, and heading down the path of recovery after the impact of natural disasters.

During these 45 years, USAID has invested more than two billion dollars in Honduras, contributing to the reduction of poverty and creating opportunities for Hondurans through programs that focus on strengthened state of law, environment, education, agriculture, food security, municipal development, economic growth, economic infrastructure, and health.

The most important element of a country is its people, and a healthy population is essential for a country on the path of development. One of the major achievements and satisfactions that USAID has had working in Honduras has been in the reduction of infant mortality over the last two decades. During this period, USAID has played a key role alongside the Honduran government in the execution of its most important programs and strategies in the health sector. We have supported a successful vaccination program, the promotion of sales of hydration salts (Litrosol) to prevent infant deaths caused by diarrhea, the provision of basic health and nutrition services at the community level, the extension of coverage of potable water and sanitation systems in rural areas, and the greater spacing between pregnancies, which is fundamental in reducing mother and infant deaths.

An important aspect within the health sector is the nutritional health of the people, especially for the most vulnerable. USAID has contributed more than \$37 million in the last 6 years to improve food security in the rural areas, allocating provisions to at-risk families. The overwhelming majority of these resources are used to execute health activities and development programs designed to combat the causes of malnutrition in the communities suffering from extreme poverty.



**Since last year, with the help of USAID, there has been a strong increase in the access to rapid tests for HIV/AIDS through local NGOs (non-governmental organizations). These tests allow individuals to receive their diagnosis in 45 minutes.**



**The significant support of USAID in the last 3 decades was a key factor in the establishment and continuation of the successful**



**More than 50% of the support from USAID in the health sector is directed towards programs that work with women and children under 5 years old, including nutrition, the treatment of diarrhea and pneumonia, spacing pregnancies, prenatal care, and infant and mother health care.**





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### FIGHTING AGAINST HIV/AIDS IN HONDURAS

USAID invests roughly \$6 million per year for the prevention of HIV/AIDS in people at high risk in contracting the disease in Tegucigalpa, the Sula Valley, Comayagua, Yoro, Colón, Cortes, and Atlántida. The programs include mass media campaigns and work with local NGOs to promote the prevention of the disease and the support of people living with HIV/AIDS. The activities are focused on the community level.

One important component is the development of local theater groups to educate others about the prevention of HIV and reduce discrimination against peo-

ple living with HIV. These volunteer youths learn about the prevention of HIV and support their peers in making smart, healthy decisions by working directly within their communities.

USAID supports the production of the radio soap operas, *Los Ancestros No Mueren* (*Our Ancestors Don't Die*) and *Larubeya* (*On the Seashore*), whose messages promote the prevention of HIV/AIDS in more than 30 Garifuna communities on the north coast by using mass media.



### CONTRIBUTING TO THE DECREASE IN MATERNAL AND INFANT DEATHS

In 1990, 182 women were dying due to pregnancy complications for every one hundred thousand births. In 1997, these numbers had been reduced to 108. This result is due in large part to the successful execution of the health strategy supported by USAID to change women's habits, such as encouraging women to give birth in hospitals and clinics rather than in the house, prenatal care, the spacing of pregnancies with family planning, and the control of infection and hemorrhaging during and after the birth.



USAID supports the strategy of *Atención Integral de la Niñez* in the community in order to reduce infant mortality. More than 4,000 monitors of the program give advice to mothers about the advantages of breast-feeding, the importance of vaccinations, and the treatment of common illnesses in the children of the poorest communities.

### IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



With the collaboration of USAID, the Secretary of Health created the position of an Environmental Health Officer. This person is responsible for the control of environmental risks like water quality, diseases transmitted by mosquitoes and other animals, and those transmitted by foods. USAID has supported the training of more than 725 technical officers that work in all parts of Honduras.





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### USAID SUPPORTS FOOD SECURITY FOR THE RURAL POPULATIONS OF HONDURAS



The Food Security Program is carried out in 400 communities in 52 municipalities in the departments of Lempira, Intibucá, La Paz, Copán, Ocotepeque, Santa Bárbara, Francisco Morazán, Choluteca, and Valle. To reduce malnutrition, the program uses an integrated focus to promote maternal-infant health based on the education of the mothers, crop production and agricultural diversification, and the strengthening of communities and municipal authorities in the design and execution of development plans and local infrastructure.

### DECENTRALIZING AND LOCAL TRAINING TO PROVIDE HEALTH SERVICES

USAID works extensively with the Secretary of Health in the decentralization of health services provided to the public. The decentralization allows the local authorities and organizations, who are more familiar with the more pressing health issues, to use federal government funds to extend and improve health services.

Along with the World Bank, USAID brings technical assistance and financing to municipalities and communities selected by the government to administer services. Today, these decentralized services are offered in Copán, Comayagua, Lempira, Francisco Morazán, El Paraíso, and Santa Bárbara, benefiting approximately 160,000 people.

One success story of this approach is the health clinic of Santa Rita, Copán. In this clinic, 700 births were monitored last year, a much higher number than the national average of 200 births in clinics that have not been decentralized.



**USAID supports local organizations in the development and application of systems and procedures to facilitate the administration of clinics and health centers in less accessible areas.**

### Message from the USAID Director, Paul Tuebner



Good health is a key element in the eradication of poverty all around the world, as well as an important factor in the Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty in Honduras. For USAID, it is satisfying to have collaborated with the Government of Honduras to improve health and nutrition for the last 45 years.

health, such as the prevention of contagious diseases such as measles and HIV/AIDS, the control of infectious diseases such as dengue, tuberculosis, and malaria, and other threats related to food hygiene and water quality. Our food security program goes further than just providing health services by also focusing on economic viability (or the lack thereof) as one of the principal factors that leads to malnutrition.

USAID focuses its programs in improving health and nutrition for mothers and children, since the majority of preventable deaths occur in this demographic group. USAID has brought support to the implementation of the strategy of the *Atención Integral de la Niñez* in rural communities, in the successful family planning program of the Secretary of Health and ASHONPLAFA (the Honduran Association for Family Planning), and in efforts to improve the quality of basic care during births.

The decentralization and strengthening of governments and local organizations to solve their own problems is one of the main priorities of USAID in all of its development sectors. In the health sector, USAID has brought technical assistance to the Secretary of Health in the development of functioning models of decentralized health systems to increase the availability of health services to those people who otherwise would have limited access.

USAID also provides assistance in other problematic areas of

We hope to continue working with the Secretary of Health in our efforts to continue improving the health of the Honduran people.