



The Joy of Being a Volunteer



Photo: USAID/Honduras Gabriela Chinchilla

“What motivates us are the children. There is a need in our community to better inform mothers about health care and nutrition. Thanks to USAID and the people of the United States, we can help others in our community. We are so grateful to USAID for this donation.”

- Iris Cáliz, Volunteer

Life is not easy for Iris Cáliz. Her two-year-old daughter has a medical condition that requires treatment in the capital city of Tegucigalpa in Honduras once a month. This involves a long trip, most of it on dirt roads. Although her daughter's special needs take up much of her time, this does not stop her from being the only woman to volunteer at the Community Health Center in the rural community of Zacate Blanco. Iris is one of eight volunteers who give of their time every day to educate their community.

USAID's Title II Food for Peace Program works in the poorest parts of Honduras improving nutrition in the community through food distribution, child-growth monitoring, and nutrition education. The volunteers receive training in primary health care and nutrition in order to improve the health of community members and prevent common diseases such as diarrhea and pneumonia. The volunteers also refer patients to health centers or hospitals if needed. They distribute rations of up to 50 lbs. a month of corn, beans, and rice to families with pregnant women or children under two years of age. These children are also weighed every month to monitor their growth process and alert parents of sudden weight loss that could be an indication of a more serious problem.

As a result of USAID's efforts in this community, as well as the hard work of the volunteers, there hasn't been a case of infant mortality in Zacate Blanco since the program started in 1996. This, according to volunteers, is the reason they know they can't quit.

First Person

