



Evaluation of the Honduras Country Program, 2010-11 to 2016-17

Summary Report

October 23, 2017

Why is it important?

This evaluation was conducted to provide an evidence-based neutral assessment of development assistance in Honduras to Canadians, Parliamentarians, Ministers, Central Agencies, Global Affairs Canada management, partners and beneficiaries.

It aims to contribute to informed decision-making and to support policy and program improvements by helping to identify good practices and lessons.

- **Evaluation Period:** 2010-11 to 2016-17
- **Total bilateral aid disbursements** 2010-11 to 2015-16: \$175 million, with average disbursements of \$29 million per year
- **Data Methods:**
 - key stakeholder interviews (n=74)
 - focus groups with project beneficiaries (n=23), including a total of 264 participants (134F/130M)
 - site visits (n=8 projects)
 - project review (n=27 projects, assessment of implementation and results)
 - project financial and timeline analysis
 - document review
- **Evaluation Completed:** October 2017

What the evaluation assessed:

Global Affairs Canada's development assistance programming in Honduras between 2010-11 and 2016-17, with focus on projects supported by the Americas Branch (NGM) alongside a purposively selected sample of projects supported by the Partnerships for Development Innovation Branch (KFM).

The evaluation questions that were asked:

Relevance:

- To what extent is the Honduras Program addressing the needs of the target populations?
- To what extent is the Honduras Program aligned with the country's needs and national priorities?

Effectiveness & Efficiency

- What factors influenced the effectiveness of the Honduras Program?
- Are there opportunities to improve Program efficiency?
- Results achieved - To what extent did the Honduras Program achieve intended outputs and immediate outcomes and contribute to intended intermediate and ultimate outcomes?

Sustainability

- What is the likelihood that the results/benefits will continue beyond project funding? Is there evidence that benefits have been sustained in areas where funding has ended?

Cross-Cutting Themes

- To what extent did the Honduras Program integrate gender equality, environmental sustainability and governance considerations in its development programming? Have expected results been achieved?



What the evaluation found

Relevance

Projects were aligned with target population needs and were largely designed and implemented using participatory and consultative approaches. Bilateral aid to Honduras during the evaluation period focused on increasing food security and securing the future of children and youth through investments in health and education. While programming was highly relevant to the country's needs, it was noted that the department was initially slow to respond to an evolving Honduran context, regional priorities, and issues of importance to Canadians.

Effectiveness & Efficiency

- A challenging Honduran context alongside several departmental changes limited the overall efficiency and effectiveness of programming. Despite these external and internal challenges, significant project-level results were achieved.
- Canadian international assistance added value by delivering high-quality technical assistance, building capacity and supporting innovative approaches.
- Some projects developed strategies to better reach the poorest and most vulnerable but was a need to better define and differentiate target groups.
- While there were many well-performing projects, the strategic impact of the program was limited by uneven application of Results Based Management (RBM), limited coordination between projects and branches as well as geographic and sectoral dispersion of programming.
- The efficiency and effectiveness of delivery modalities was mixed with the implementation of Program Based Approaches (PBAs) proving to be challenging in the Honduran context.
- While effectiveness of donor coordination forums varied by sector and time period, Canada was perceived as a strong contributor.
- Canada's reputation as a trusted partner enabled Global Affairs Canada to make a significant contribution to policy dialogue on gender issues by getting players at the table to work collaboratively.

Sustainability

- Support for capacity-building and the development of replicable project models contributed to the durability and scaling up of results.
- However, in health and education sectors, the limited capacity of Honduran governmental institutions, alongside reduced donor funding presents challenges for sustaining results.

Cross-Cutting Issues

- The level of integration of cross-cutting issues, and results achieved, varied by issue and sector.
- Governance considerations were at the forefront of programming given the complex political and social context of Honduras.
 - There was strong integration of environmental sustainability considerations in food security and sustainable economic growth programming driven by increased awareness of the need to reduce and mitigate the impacts of climate change.
 - Gender considerations were better integrated at the project-level than in program-level planning and reporting. Projects faced significant challenges in achieving gender-related results in Honduras. Having strong local gender expertise provided valuable support and helped to implement concrete actions.

Summary of Recommendations and Management Responses

Recommendation 1:

Review project management processes to identify inefficiencies, expedite the time required to complete project agreements and further streamline and standardize requirements.

Agreed: The Honduras Development Program with support from the International Assistance Operations Bureau (IAOB) will identify and address process inefficiencies that are within the program's control. The IAOB will address programming process and harmonization issues of a corporate nature by incorporating solutions into related corporate action plans. The Grants and Contributions Management Bureau will examine delays encountered in the agreement preparation phase for initiatives developed in Honduras. Findings will inform action plans to improve the efficiency and effectiveness programming processes and management practices.

Recommendation 2:

Improve longer-term strategic planning at the program level.

Agreed: In 2015, the Honduras Program adjusted its longer-term strategic planning to focus on two thematic areas currently referred to as: growth that works for everyone and inclusive governance (including the promotion and protection of human rights) with focus on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. A performance measurement framework that is aligned with the Feminist International Assistance Policy and includes reporting on program-level results will be developed.

Recommendation 3:

Continue to improve mechanisms to share knowledge and create synergies across projects and partners supported by different branches.

Agreed: The Honduras Development Program will build on existing efforts to share knowledge with Global Affairs Canada branches and external project partners and to improve coherence at the strategic and implementation levels. The Partnerships for Innovation Branch will continue to seek opportunities to increase knowledge sharing, improve coordination and harness synergies where possible.

Recommendation 4:

Target gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls with a program-level strategy.

Agreed: The Honduras Development Program will build on existing efforts to: develop a performance measurement framework that identifies gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls as the driver of its development efforts; dedicate funds to continue to actively engage in donor coordination and policy dialogue on gender equality; to continue to engage local gender equality specialists, work with HQ gender equality specialists and provide ongoing training as needed; and to reactivate the local gender equality specialist network.

Recommendation 5:

Implement information management mechanisms to better document and transfer corporate memory.

Agreed: The Honduras Development Program is implementing an improved information management system to facilitate knowledge transfer between the Honduras Country Office and HQ and to better transfer corporate memory within the Country Office.

Considerations for Future International Assistance Country Programming

Considerations for Geographic Branch Programming

- 1) Local funds can provide flexible, agile support to strategic pilot projects that could be upscaled, including targeted initiatives to promote the empowerment of women and girls. They can also help to engage with new institutional partners and facilitate work with CSOs.
- 2) In-country gender networks can play a valuable role in building capacity, raising gender awareness and improving the monitoring and achievement of results.
- 3) PBAs require a strong degree of local ownership, management capacity and systems. Having a technical assistance component at the start of a PBA helps to build necessary institutional capacity.

Considerations for International Assistance Programming across Branches

- 1) Partners and implementing agencies are developing strategies to better define and meet the differentiated needs of poor and vulnerable groups. Lessons could be documented and shared.
- 2) Developing exit strategies early in project implementation can build local ownership, increase potential sustainability and help partners leverage resources from other sources.
- 3) Longer-term or phased projects may be necessary to achieve sustainable results, including in cross-cutting areas.
- 4) Leveraging successful past project experiences and facilitating south-south cooperation can increase program impact in a cost-effective way.
- 5) When designing and implementing value-chain projects, attention needs to be placed on providing specialized resources to develop marketing and commercial capacities and strategies to access high-value markets.
- 6) Joint monitoring missions across projects supported by different departmental branches could be considered to foster knowledge sharing and improve the effectiveness of monitoring.
- 7) Providing country offices with access to corporate information management systems (e.g., EDRMS and Infobank) could improve operational efficiency and enhance knowledge transfer between the field and headquarters.