



Statement

Printed from www.mcc.gov.

***Revised* MCC Management Response to “Impact Evaluation of the Farmer Training and Development Activity in Honduras”**

NORC at the University of Chicago, May 9, 2014

MCC welcomes this report. The original final report was submitted by NORC in October 2012. Following the public posting on the report, several stakeholders raised concerns around the technical and factual accuracy of the report. This prompted several rounds of review including: (i) May 2013 local stakeholder workshop in Honduras prompting revisions to the report, and (ii) review of the revised report by MCC technical team and external peer review prompting further revisions to the report. All comments from these reviews and NORC’s response to these comments are documented in Annex 4 and Annex 5 of the November 25, 2013 Final Report.

MCC Management has analyzed NORC’s findings and recommendations. MCC Management recognizes the efforts undertaken by NORC’s team to identify a valid counterfactual as a basis for estimating the results of this activity. The report clearly documents that the treatment and control groups of farmers had substantially different characteristics, making it impossible to use the control group as a valid counterfactual in the evaluation. MCC Management recognizes that the report presented by NORC makes a compelling case for the use of an alternative model-based evaluation approach intended to distinguish program impacts from the effects of strategically selected program participants. While this analysis suggests there was a positive impact on farmers participating in the training, due to limitations of this approach, the MCC technical team does not believe that this model overcomes the issue of selection bias.

For future programs that require farmer training, MCC Management recognizes that the program logic, including who should be selected for program participation, must be clearly defined based on program objectives to inform both the farmer training model and MCC’s efforts to learn from the model. Future evaluations should therefore be designed to test the farmer training model as defined and implemented in order to mitigate the challenges faced during the FTDA evaluation where random assignment did not prove feasible. In this case, to understand the Honduras farmer training model, it would have been useful for NORC to respond to MCC’s technical comment related to the issues for farmer rejection by the implementer (pg. 147). These implementation challenges highlight the importance of proactive and on-going communication and coordination among stakeholders.