Honduras Reading Activity Launch special guests, from left to right: Marcial Solís, Minister of Education, Juan Orlando Hernández, President of Honduras; Heide B. Fulton, Chargé D’affaires of the U.S. Embassy; Fernando Cossich, Mission Director of USAID Honduras and students from the Juan Lindo School in Gracias, Honduras.

Honduras Reading Activity Officially Launched

The HRA launch served as a platform to formally present the project to key education stakeholders from rural and urban areas of Honduras.

At the end of April, the Honduras Reading Activity (HRA) was formally launched in Gracias, a town about 300 kilometers from the capital, Tegucigalpa. To underscore the concrete efforts to collaborate across donor initiatives, the USAID-funded Quality Reading Materials Project also participated in the launch.

Colorful balloons and folk dances provided a vivid backdrop for the event, which was attended by 350 people, including the President of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernández, the Chargé D’affaires of the U.S. Embassy, Heide B. Fulton, the Minister of Education, Marcial Solís, and the Mission Director of USAID Honduras, Fernando Cossich.

“The important investment USAID and the U.S. Government is giving to the education of Honduran boys and girls will reflect in hope and dreams for our people,” said President Hernández during his speech. “Reading is one of the most basic and important lessons a human being needs in order to develop and grow.”

Thanks to the success of the project launch, the HRA now has a public platform on which to establish and strengthen connections with key education stakeholders in order to achieve its objectives. “The launch was a success,” said Seidda Mendoza, HRA Deputy Chief of Party. “All the challenges and work ahead are exciting to our team. We are all committed to implement this project that will respond to the hopes and dreams for all children in Honduras. We want them to have dreams for our country; we want them to believe they can grow and cherish their life in Honduras. And to do that, they have to start by learning to read and to make their imagination grow.”

The HRA’s objective is to benefit 700,000 children through key activities such as training teachers, providing reading materials, strengthening existing libraries or opening new ones and encouraging parents and caregivers to be actively involved in the educational outcomes of their children.
Honduran Children Learn to Read with Updated Teaching Methodology

HRA reaching initial group of 750 Teacher Facilitators to serve as model for new reading methodology.

The Honduras Reading Activity (HRA) is training teachers in evidence-based instructional practices and has already begun to see the results in action as teachers adopt these methodologies in the classroom.

In preparation for these trainings, the HRA worked with the General Directorate of Professional Development (DGDP) to identify 750 skilled teachers to support the project as Teacher Facilitators. The HRA Master Trainers provide these teachers with specialized training in improved teaching techniques for reading. The Teacher Facilitators are then tasked with sharing and coaching teachers in these techniques in more than 12 schools in their school networks. During this process, the HRA also met with 241 school directors to present the project’s mission and objectives. Directors also expressed their interest in the project given their concerns about the quality of the current reading instruction offered in schools.

From June 11-29, the HRA conducted the Teacher Facilitator Workshop in Santa Bárbara, Central District, Tela, San Pedro Sula and Lempira, Honduras. This workshop built on the previous training conducted with HRA Master Trainers, who led this workshop. All 750 facilitators participated, and for many, the workshop provided them with an opportunity to develop and practice new instructional methods for the first time. “This workshop has been one of the most important things I’ve learned in my career,” said Roberto Dubón, a Teacher Facilitator from Santa Bárbara.

“My colleagues and I have received incredibly important training. The knowledge we have acquired will reflect in the classroom and quality of education of boys and girls. Such is the excitement of long awaited change in this kind of subject that teacher facilitators shared inspiring...”

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A student in Erandique, Honduras, reads a short story using the new techniques provided by Mirza Orvelina Sánchez, one of the HRA Teacher Facilitators.

Leonardo Mejía Bonilla from the Perpetuo Socorro School in San Pedro Sula shares an idea during the Directors Meeting.
Beky Zelaya, a HRA Master Trainer, walks teachers through materials during the training in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

Yorleni Calderón, one of the HRA Master Trainers, shares new methodologies with Teacher Facilitators during the training.

moments with each other.

“We [the teachers] are the protagonists of change in Honduras. It is our responsibility to ensure this process reaches the classrooms, improving reading outcomes in children. We want our efforts and voices strong and direct as they have been during our participation in this workshop that has left us positive and inspired.”

Once the training ended, the HRA Master Trainers asked the Facilitators to share videos of themselves using the new instructional methods in their schools. About a week later, the HRA began to receive footage of children from rural schools learning how to read using the successful reading techniques that were taught during the workshop. The footage and testimonials serve as inspirational fuel to the HRA team, reminding the project to continue to focus on its objectives, as more pictures, videos and inspiring stories are developing everyday in Honduran schools.

We [the teachers] are the protagonists of change in Honduras. It is our responsibility to ensure this process reaches the classrooms, improving reading outcomes in children.

Roberto Dubón
Teacher Facilitator
José Cecilio del Valle School, Machola, Santa Bárbara, Honduras

During a three-week workshop session, 750 Teacher Facilitators received instruction in evidence-based teacher training.

During the workshop session, the Teacher Facilitators model engaging reading instructional activities with their peers.

Teacher Facilitator, Arnold Leiva, from San José de Colinas in Santa Bárbara department teaching his class.
Updated reading curriculum standards are key to the HRA’s work.

National education assessments and international experience reveal the urgency and need to update the reading curriculum standards in Honduras. To achieve this aim, the HRA is supporting the General Directorate of Curriculum and Evaluation (DGCE) to incorporate updates to the standards in order to align with international experience.

In May, the HRA shared the proposal to update the current reading curriculum standards with the project’s international reading experts. This was then shared with the DGCE, and the project received feedback in early June from the DGCE. The HRA’s three international reading experts and the HRA technical team held a two-day teleconference on June 25 and 26 to review the DGCE proposed changes. A new version of the standards is slated to be completed in mid-August.

The revision and updating of the reading curriculum standards is very important for the Honduran educational system and for the work of the HRA, since it serves as the point of reference for reading instruction. The purpose is to work hand in hand with the Ministry of Education to ensure the alignment and coherence of the processes and didactic products that make harmonized teaching instruction possible.

“The role and leadership played by the HRA technical advisory team working with DGCE has advanced efficiently in our efforts of updating our reading curriculum standards,” said Daisy Coello, HRA Standards and Curriculum Advisor.

FSU met with UPNFM officials to discuss the update of pre-service teacher training.

In June, Florida State University (FSU), one of the Honduras Reading Activity’s (HRA) partners, conducted its first visit to the Francisco Morazán National Pedagogical University (UPNFM). Technical teams from both universities met to outline next steps to adapt the in-service teacher training model for pre-service teacher training.

At the UPNFM campus, the technical teams shared and discussed the current training methodology and established a start date to accompany FSU in the review of the study plans for the primary school teacher program, which will support the HRA’s in-service teacher training efforts.

As one of the next steps in this process, FSU will conduct a mixed-methods baseline assessment of the teacher training centers, evaluating their structures, teaching methods, and specific strengths and constraints.