**Project Cultivar: Advancing Labor Rights in Agriculture**

**Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor**

**Project Cultivar** aims to raise labor standard compliance and increase the competitiveness of the agricultural sector in Honduras, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic.

**Goal:** To build ethical market access for producers, through labor and environmental standards compliance

**Countries:** Dominican Republic, Honduras, Nicaragua

**Sectors:** Agriculture (Bananas, Melon, Sugarcane)

“**Project Cultivar has had the vision to provide workshops on labor rights, giving workers and managers the tools to resolve their issues internally. They no longer need an intermediary.**”

- Candida Rosa Rodriguez, Ministry of Labor, Nicaragua

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**Project Cultivar enables a culture of compliance in a challenging sector for labor rights**

Consumers increasingly demand commitment to labor standards from both producers and retailers, while becoming increasingly aware of the grave challenges to workers rights in agriculture in Central America and the Dominican Republic. Thus, producers and exporters from the region encounter a market incentive added to their social responsibility to ensure human rights at work.

Agriculture accounts for 10-20% of GDP of Nicaragua, Honduras and Dominican Republic, but, facing competition from lower-cost production globally, ethical production presents a sustainability strategy for the region’s sector.

Workers in Dominican agriculture are largely denied access to social protections, in Nicaraguan agriculture severe health risks, & in Honduras stark barriers to social dialogue. Cultivar works to empower workers to exercise their rights, to increase employers commitment & tools to continually improve labor conditions, and to strengthen government’s capacity to fulfill its mandate to enforce labor laws.

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### Objectives

- **Increased understanding of labor rights** among workers and management of labor rights in participating farms
- **Improved capacity of workers, employers & labor inspectors** on workers’ labor rights, management systems for employers’ and labor inspectors’ enforcement of labor laws
- **Improved labor relations and working conditions** Sustainable mechanisms implemented in targeted areas, including health and safety, communications & grievance resolution mechanisms

### Strategies

- **Strengthen Local Leadership:** SAI partners with local NGOs to ground international standards in the local context & enable continuity of activities
- **Training & Build Capacity of the 3 Pillars of Labor Relations:** Workers, Employers, Government - on labor rights & management systems
- **Facilitate Social Dialogue:** Local and sector-wide Dialogue Roundtables with multi-stakeholder participation to promote and enable dialogue on labor rights among workers, employers, government and other stakeholders

Social Accountability International — Programs
4 Years of Project Cultivar - Key Achievements

- 45% of participating producers reported an increase in resolved grievances at the farm
- Train-the-Trainers program enabled 95 worker leaders to train peers on occupational health & safety
- 26% increase in farms with active Joint Worker-Manager Committees for Occupational Health and Safety
- Cholera prevention plan implemented at participating Dominican workplaces, avoiding spread of epidemic during 30,000-person harvest migration period, post Haitian-Earthquake 2011
- Banana producers, local workers rights NGOs & government authorities negotiated safer, freer movement for Haitian migrant workers in Northwest Dominican Republic
- Cultivar convened a first dialogue among sugar producers, companies, the government and local NGOs, beginning a new chapter in the sector whose history is tainted with instances of slavery-like conditions
- Finca Coquimba attributes productivity improvement - from last to most productive among Chiquita banana suppliers - to participation in Cultivar
- Training materials on labor rights, management systems, OSH & grievance resolution at agricultural workplaces distributed in all 3 countries in Haitian Creole for Dominican agricultural workers

Project Cultivar Partnerships

SAI partners with four locally-based NGOs, specialists in rights-based, sustainable development, and delivered training for 38 Workplaces, 2,195 Workers & Managers, & 283 labor inspectors

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<td>Sugarcane</td>
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<td>Institute for Local Culture &amp; Self Reliance of the NW Region (INCAP)</td>
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<td>Honduras</td>
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