



Olga Canelas

PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Honduras

In Honduras' rural areas, farmers struggle to produce enough crops to provide for their families. Extreme poverty exacerbated by persistent drought make it difficult for families to thrive. Despite these hardships, parents want to send their children to school. Children walk miles along mountainous terrain to attend school, but they often go with empty stomachs, impacting their ability to concentrate and perform well.

Olga Canelas is helping thousands of children access nutritious food so they can succeed in school. Olga works with CRS Honduras on the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program, which aims to improve the literacy of school-age children. The program provides student meals and school materials, trains teachers and community members, and makes improvements to school infrastructure.

Olga is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Food for Education program to ensure it is having the greatest impact. She spends most of her time in the field monitoring the effectiveness of CRS programs with students, teachers and parents. "I enjoy being able to talk to our program participants, understand what their needs are and design better programs for them. It is amazing to hear the stories of people we work with—that is a great motivation to keep working," she says.

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Olga is from a small town in the north of Honduras. When she was finishing college in the capital Tegucigalpa, she had the opportunity to visit one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. That experience struck her; it was then that she knew she wanted to spend her life helping people.

Through the Food for Education program, 52,000 students are receiving a daily lunch, keeping them in school and giving them the energy, they need to succeed. Students often bring containers to school with them to bring home leftover food to their families.

A simple meal is helping to change the lives of thousands of people and the future of Honduras. Olga says, "It is exciting to see how CRS is changing people's lives—not just during the project period, but in a long-term, sustainable way. We are changing them, and they are changing me, too."