



Changing lives in Copán, Honduras

Welcome to our new quarterly newsletter to supplement Peter's trip reports and student letters to give you a broader understanding of all that IPA is currently doing in the Copán Ruinas region of Honduras. We can't hope to cover all that is happening but will include a few stories of interest from the range of our operations. We hope you find it of interest and feel free to contact us with suggestions.

In this issue:

- "Creating the best weekend High School in the Region"
- Leveraging Education into a Successful Life
- IPA Manages Multiple Construction Projects
- Rapid Development- Addressing Poverty from Multiple Directions
- Offering a Trade Education as an Alternative to Migration
- Why not come along on an IPA Trip to Copán?





“Creating the Best Weekend High School in the Region”



Students at the Rio Amarillo High School

The problem

Virtually all our villages have a middle school, or access to one in the next village, but they very rarely have high schools. Students need a good high school in town, with classes only one or two days per week. This holds down transportation and lunch cost and allows students to help their parents 5 days a week, at home or in the fields. A good high school will offer several career paths to provide students with some choices for their future.

There are currently three 1- or 2-day high schools in the region's towns. The two private schools are less than satisfactory so we stopped offering scholarships for them. The one public offering only teaches one career and has a long-held reputation for ignoring problems such as bullying, harassment and drug use.

Submitted by Peter Martin

The solution

Our vision is to “create the best weekend high school in the region,” by partnering with the one-year-old private high school in Rio Amarillo (Santa Rita). The facilities were built to a high standard; the three teachers have an excellent reputation; they are enthusiastic about partnering with us; and they offer three careers: Business Administration, Accounting and Finance, and Science and Humanities.

The facilities have three classrooms that were built for a public middle school, operating on weekdays. The high school uses the same facilities on weekends. Tenth grade meets on Saturdays, and 11th and 12th grades on Sundays. Students attend one day per week, for 7 hours.

The one drawback to this school is that it is 20 minutes east of Santa Rita. To avoid long multi-segment commutes from many of our villages, we are contracting a private bus service.



IPA members negotiating with teachers at the Rio Amarrillo High School



Leveraging Education into a Successful Life



Dear members of IPA:

I am pleased to greet you as a thank you for your support.

For me, it was a priority need to have access to a scholarship since due to my economic situation I could not continue with my studies. I am from Barbasco Cabañas. I am member of a family of 8. My parents' education ended on 3rd grade due to lack of schools and money. My biggest brother made it until 6th grade. I am coursing university, and my younger brothers are in middle school. Now I can see a difference in education! We have access and opportunities that before weren't possible. I studied in my village primary school, then moved to town to a middle school and now currently I am studying to become a teacher in basic and primary education.

I am also working as a teacher in primary school in my village Barbasco, which is amazing! This work has generated knowledge in my personal life, it has improved my lifestyle and living conditions. I have inspired my brothers and young people in my community.

This scholarship has given me the opportunity to continue my university studies. This opportunity opened my hopes and dreams of becoming a professional and thus inspiring other young people to get ahead in education. I am also happy to be proud of my family. Thank you, IPA, for helping me, my family, and my community.

~ Elvin Ruben Velasquez

Submitted by Cinthia Santos



Construction

Multiple School, Village and Water Projects



IPA currently has 22 active construction projects, mostly for improving the facilities at village schools. This includes a District Grant from The Rotary Foundation to repair the latrines in nine schools. Currently the villagers in El Caobal, with the help of IPA, are hard at work on improvements to their water system. This involved replacing 1.8 miles of supply pipe and rebuilding the whole distribution system. This work is going on during the coffee harvest, which is exceptional.

Submitted by Walt Guterbock



Rapid Development

Addressing Poverty from Multiple Directions

Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLAs) have been successful in all 11 villages that were enrolled in our Rapid Development program. The VSLAs are owned and controlled by members of the village and allow families to build up a savings account that they can use for family needs, medical expenses, emergencies or to grow a small business. In the future we see this as a funding source for home repair and education. The VSLAs are also serving as a source of credit for agricultural loans at far lower interest rates than those offered by agricultural vendors. These have allowed farmers to buy fertilizer for their coffee plants and food crops. Bank loans are generally unavailable to small farmers. IPA has also helped VSLAs consolidate their fertilizer orders to command better pricing. Currently IPA is working with a local lawyer to get legal registration for all 11 VSLAs by the end of the year. This will allow them to make larger loans and to make loans to non-VSLA members at a non-member interest rate. So far there have been **no defaults** on VSLA loans.

Submitted by Walt Guterbock





Trade Education

Alternative to Migration

For several years we have recognized the need for 'education in the trades' for school graduates, who otherwise return to the villages to pick coffee during the season and day labor (\$6/day) the rest of the year. This also leaves them the most vulnerable to the migration pull.

Unfortunately, over the years we have witnessed several government subsidized Trade Schools come and go, all poorly operated, poorly equipped and run by unqualified staff.

On our trip down last March we visited a trade school in Santa Rosa (two hours away). This school is very well managed, well-equipped and has an excellent faculty. It is solidly supported by a US NGO and has demonstrated an excellent track record.



This fall we sent twelve students to the school to test out two of their programs, electrical and welding. Despite the five hours round trip the students did very well and several of them graduated right into jobs with the local power company. Others are talking to local companies.

We plan on doing another test run of students in the spring, after the coffee harvest is completed, in other courses including sewing, baking, beauty, barbering, cooking.

We are also in early discussions with the school on possibly partnering on building a campus near to Copán Ruinas. Stay tuned for more on this project!

Submitted by Mark Lascelles

How you can help the people of Copán, Honduras

- Support a village primary school in our Adopt-a-School program
- Sponsor a secondary or college student in our Adopt-a-Dream program
- Support a Mayan village in our Adopt-a-Village program
- Fund a specific project that interests you
- Make a donation in any amount to support our work



Interested? Visit www.ipafoundation.org or email Marty Pease at mconlogue@msn.com.



Why not come on a Trip to Copan?



There are two trips each year to Copan Ruinas, Honduras when groups of Rotarians and friends go to support IPA's work. The trip in February is the beginning of the school year and all the school supplies for the students and teachers are delivered. In November, at the end of the school year, each school is visited again to get end of year statistics and collect the mobile library books. Each trip is two weeks long and all 40 school are visited. **You are invited to come along!**

in November, the group included four Canadians which added a twist because the USA election occurred while we were there and the Canadians also had a vested interest. The first week the weather was awful with lots of rain and driving in the mud was challenging. We were not able to get to all the villages so the villagers came to us.

The second week was sunny and the temperatures tolerable. It was much more pleasant to be in the back of the truck, bouncing along dirt roads to the villages.

We added two new schools this year, La Ruda and El Florido. La Ruda's elementary school is being sponsored through the Adopt-a-School program, and the village El Florido is being supported through the Adopt-a-Village program.

These trips include plenty of time to enjoy the sites around Copán. **Come and join us!**

www.ipafoundation.org | info@ipafoundation.org



Thank You

to all our generous supporters without whom this would never happen.
You are truly changing lives!