

How You Can Help

in

Honduras



By

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How You Can Help in Honduras

Introduction

By Lance Winslow

First I wish to start by saying this project has had a tremendous impact on me and a new restored faith for the future of humanity. Once you read this eBook, I hope you will also feel the same. You see, recently after the Online Think Tank was rapping up a research report and action plan for the poverty stricken urban slums of Nairobi, Kenya we quickly realized that even if the plan were implemented tomorrow; 100s of thousands of people would die before it was completed.

There the problems and sheer numbers of HIV/AIDS infected people are living surrounded by ditches filled with raw sewage; it was a challenge to attempt to put together any sort of solution. It indeed takes its toll on the psyche and the reality of what should be done is really unthinkable. One slum has 800,000 people living in less than a 2.8 square mile area.

While at an all time mental low after confronting the challenges and facing the reality head-on in Africa, I glanced at a headline in a US Today Newspaper in the lobby of the hotel and I noticed Jenna Bush was announcing her new book about a single mom in Panama living with HIV. Jenna is putting a real human face on the problems after spending time as an intern for UNICEF in Central America. *The very next day I began my research.*

Then not more than a few hours after starting this project and seeing the enormity of this undertaking; a fellow writer, Dr. Nathalie Fiset from Canada contacted me and told of her medical mission trip to Honduras. The more I dug into the data the more I was amazed at the number of volunteers and the amount of work that has been going into helping in Central America from so many different groups with niche focuses all working together towards a common cause.

There are religious, non-profits and medical professionals alike all giving a 110% effort there. For more than two-decades volunteers from North America are making a difference, a huge difference. These countless volunteers and organizations have been working tirelessly to not only keep up with the challenges, but also lay a foundation for the future.

The People of North America are rising to the occasion to make a better life for those who live in the Western Hemisphere, while in other places around the world many people turn a blind eye to what is going on in their own back yard, in their own nations and on their side of the world.

I would invite you to read all the eBooks in this series and you are invited to read them for free in the Online Think Tank Reading Room. It is time the World knew what was going on and what "WE" are going to do about it.

The volunteers who go on these missions are the true heroes of humanity and their work, determination and powerful perseverance is proof positive that in the present period we can potentially wipe out human poverty. As you read this eBook, I would like you to think about all the hard work that is being done, all the donations and all the volunteers, then ask yourself;

What Can I Do to Help Make Difference in Honduras?

There are so many things that we work on in our own communities and these are our first priorities, as this is where we live and work and where our own children grow up. Yet so many of us take it for granted that we live in the greatest civilization ever created in the history of humankind. It is time to look outside this bubble and look around and then look in the mirror and ask what we can do for the children of the World. ***Please Think on It.***



Chapter I

Challenges of Life in Honduras



Honduras is one of the most beautiful countries in the World with its spectacular mountains and gorgeous coastlines. Honduras although rich in minerals such as gold, silver, copper, lead, zinc, iron ore and timber most of the people are very poor. Indeed Honduras is considered the Third Poorest Nation per capita in the entire Western Hemisphere and 66.8% of the 6.5 million population base is considered to be impoverished. The challenges of the life in rural Honduras are not unbeatable although at first glance appear overwhelming. You see, Hondurans are a naturally tough group of people living in what many believe is paradise. Volunteers often talk about the greenery;

"YES! All green mountains, no pollution, no noise, a nice fog in the morning and we could hear the monkeys in the background. One morning we saw a nice Toucan, very colorful."



Medical Needs



Due to the abundance of vegetation there are many hardy insects in Honduras and these tough insects own the domain. This means bugs bite much harder and with more vengeance than one who is not familiar might imagine. One major problem is the rural poor of Honduras do not have purified water which causes most intestinal parasites in most that are seen by the medical mission teams. One medical volunteer to Honduras from Canada remembers;

"When we give them the medication, they get better but then they re-drink the contaminated water and get re-infested. The poor quality of water also causes people to have fungal infections of the skin. The poor hygiene conditions also causes scabies and head lice in epidemic proportion."

Of course prescribing antibiotics is not always possible as one volunteer said because if they prescribe antibiotics, they have to check if it needs refrigeration and most people in rural Honduras do not have electricity. The issue with parasites is significant and the medical professionals and their assistants spend a lot of time dealing with these issues. One MD from Canada on a medical mission to Honduras stated;

"In the US and Canada, if we you suspect a person has parasites, you do a stool sampling test and if it is positive you tell all your colleagues of your rare discovery. In Honduras, the way, you diagnose if a person has parasites, you ask them "Do you have parasites?" and they answer "Yes!"

Many Honduran children suffer from malnutrition and these same problems are visible in many of the rural villages throughout the country. A medical mission volunteer told us with great concern;

"When I ask one mother why her child was not eating properly, she answered: "We are poor. I do not have money to buy food." That broke my heart!"

The poor quality of water causes also people to have fungal and bacterial infections of the skin. If these go untreated they can become very serious very quickly and many medical teams that visit are quite alarmed by what they see. One story nearly brought the volunteer to tears when discussing what she had seen;

"I saw a woman who had a very bad leg ulcer and her feet were turning black. She would need amputation if she did not get antibiotics by her veins. We explained everything to her and although she understood everything, she said 'I need to go back to my children and take care of them.' She went out back put her shoes on and headed back home."

Most of the rural Honduras women complain of headaches, neck and back pains but if you look at their lifestyle, they walk for hours with the babies on their back to get from one point to the other. The biggest family was one which had 13 children noted one medical mission volunteer. Without adequate transportation the problems are worsened. Make no mistake these are good people, caring folks and those needing assistance are;

"...for the most part gentle, quiet, generous, gracious and grateful. The children are beautiful, well-behaved, loving and respectful. These children are the hope of Honduras"

This message appears on The Austin Episcopal Church Honduras Mission website. What a wonderful job that they are doing in Honduras. When medical mission teams go into Honduras

what sorts of illnesses do they encounter? Well, indeed the list of medical needs of the rural poor in Honduras is very large. The Austin Episcopal Church Honduras Mission explains on their website of their herculean efforts; both serious and non-serious needs. Many non-serious needs are such things as;

- Minor Illnesses
- Simple Coughs
- Viral Upper Respiratory Illnesses
- Simple Intestinal Viral Infections

These occurred in nearly three-quarters of the people they saw. One medical mission team reports using over 40 gallons of cough medicine; cough syrup. Many of these medical missions go in loaded for bear and the lists of medicine gifts are of biblical proportions for instance one team reported dispensing;

- 100,000 Tablets of Generic Tylenol
- 4,000 Bars of Soap
- 100,000 Vitamins
- 3200 Toothbrushes w/Toothpaste
- 31,000 Doses of Mebendazole for intestinal parasites
- 450 Bottles of Lindane for head lice and scabies

Most of the rural Hondurans who show up for the medical clinic tours have multiple health issues or concerns. The same medical team noted that about 4% of the folks had Hypertension. Around 20% had Arthritis. Asthma did not discriminate by age, as it was 5% across the board with patients of all ages.

Intestinal parasites were quite common amongst all ages; each time they found this they went ahead and played it safe treating the whole family. Skin problems, fungus infections and allergic reactions were found in 10% of the patients, with 12 serious wound infections (cellulitis). Also 12 sexually transmitted disease cases were discovered on their particular medical team mission.

Education Needs



[Private Photo - by Volunteer to Honduras]

Many of the folks who live in the remote rural areas of Honduras live on very little money and most do not ever get any sort of real education. Some of this is now changing due to the help of missionaries and volunteer organizations visiting the beautiful country each year. Still so much more needs to be done. Statistics indicate that the literacy rates are rising drastically and each year this becomes less and less of an issue.

Children often go to elementary school and then stop to work in the fields. The ones in the city will go to high school or college. They need transportation to get to a school as they often have to walk miles to get to school. More schools must be built and they need to teach the basics of how to build things and help themselves, as well as job skills and hygiene. Reading and writing will continue to help provide a better standard of living and quality of life in rural Honduras.

Since Hondurans are hard-working, loving people and tough enough to live in the hills with hardly any assistance, a little education will certainly go a long way. More and more volunteers are going to teach and helping train new teachers too. Of course more teachers are needed to train the locals in rural Honduras so they can in-turn teach their villages to read and write.

Building new schools and supplying them with desks, books and teaching tools is a job that many large non-profit organizations are now doing. Each year more and more is done and the progress is well documented thanks to all the volunteers.

Road Conditions



[Honduras Mission Trips Co.]

Only some of the roads in the larger cities of Honduras are paved, others are cobblestone and most are dirt. In the rural areas they are mostly all dirt and due to the average rainfall there are often landslides making the roads impassible or causing vehicles to get stuck due to heavy mud.

The mountain peaks are from 3,000 to 9,000 feet and the temperature at higher elevations can be very cold and it should be noted that 2 degrees per thousand feet you go up in elevation is the norm and when you add in some wind-chill factor, they temperatures can change along the route. The treacherous roads cause many accidents and the statistics are not pretty, better roads are needed, along with bridges, landslide barriers and runoff ditches and pipes to divert water flows.

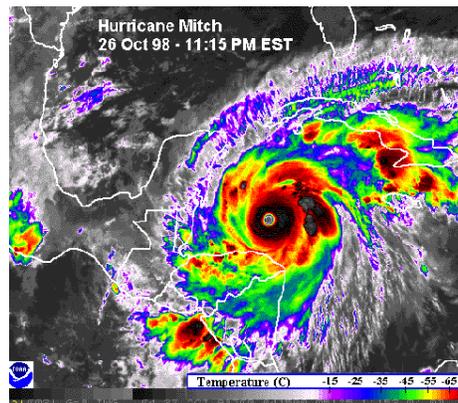
If you are interested in the some actual video footage of travels and poor road conditions in Honduras you can find them in the "References and Works Cited" section at the back of this eBook under the *Media, NGOs and Internet Articles or Pictures Worth 1000 Words Sections*. These videos are a must see for anyone going on a volunteer mission to Honduras, they were brought back by Dr. Nathalie Fiset a Doctor from one of her successful medical mission trips. One volunteer told us about her first encounter and the foreshadowing signs of the muddy road ahead in a little story of her journey thru the treacherous muddy roads;

*"I admit I was a little judgmental at first when I saw little girls with pretty dresses but that were very dirty. After riding in the back of the trucks for hours through muddy roads and small rivers, I was the dirtiest person.
Lesson learned!"*

Indeed, we had so many similar reports from volunteers during their adventures to Honduras. Stories of bouncing around in the back of a Toyota Truck and not being able to put their elbows out or they would get them mudded. Then were heard comments about leaning to one side to get traction, getting out of the truck completely to help dig out tires while stuck in a rut and of course the rain, cold, wind, small landslides along the way too.

"We had the occasion to “sample” the roads more on our mission in 2006 as we went through the mountains. They are dangerous as steep and when it comes rainy season, the rate of fatal accidents is astounding."

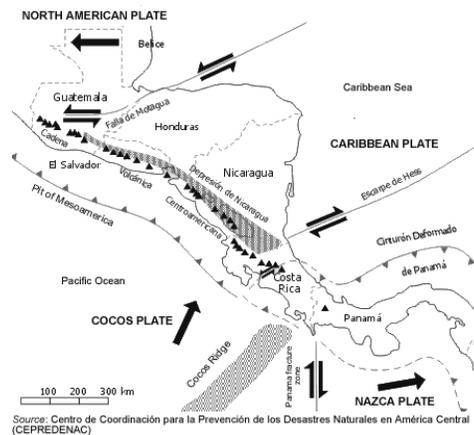
Disasters, Floods, Landslides, Hurricanes, Earthquakes



The Country of Honduras often gets huge storms during the Atlantic Tropical Hurricane Season as this extreme weather that develop in the Caribbean comes ashore and the energy is trapped by the mountainous terrain causing torrential downpours. In last week of October in 1998 Hurricane Mitch devastated Honduras and killed more than 5,657 people (some estimates were 7,000) and created 2 million homeless (nearly 12,000 missing); most were children. The Banana Crop was destroyed too and the economic loss was huge for the Nations.

It was the worst recorded Hurricane in over 200 years and each year folks worry that another catastrophic storm could hit. The 2005 Hurricane season also had major storms that affected the Banana crop and flooded out many as well as resulting in massive deaths. Honduras is known for Hurricane weather especially along the Caribbean coastline and the flood damage is all too common. Inland landslides in the mountains also result from Hurricane storm remnants. More people are killed by the landslides and severe flooding or storm surges than the actual winds. Landslides and flash flooding have been known to bury entire villages within minutes in the mountainous regions of Central America.

Honduras is also very prone to Earthquakes, which makes sense if you look at its tall mountains, which did not get there by accident. Honduras has many Earthquakes every year, only a few are really serious. Occasionally a biggie comes along and wrecks havoc on the people there. There have been notable Earthquakes of six or greater magnitudes and two 7 magnitudes since the new millennium. Some of the Earthquakes come from off-shore in the Pacific Ocean while some epicenters occur on land. See the Major Fault Line Map Sketch below;



Honduras also has Volcanoes and although they are not a huge issue, they are common in that region of Central America. Of course this also provides opportunity for Geo-Thermal Energy, which is a big plus for the Nation, as it grows in economic status and population. Honduras will need more energy in the future as the population grows about 2.4% per year.

Disease and HIV Crisis

HIV is causing severe concern in the country and many are now calling it an epidemic, as about 1.5% of the population of Honduras has HIV and are living with the virus. That number is growing at an alarming rate according to the World Health Organization and United Nations. This is the highest percentage in Central America. Although Honduras is roughly only 18% of the total population in Central America, it has nearly 60% of *the known* HIV/AIDS cases. Out of this huge HIV/AIDS virus infected folks only about 5,000 are receiving any treatment presently.

According to *Walking With Children*, a non-profit group in Wisconsin, USA they estimate almost 4,000 children are living with HIV now. Their group has set up a legal entity (Foundation) to build a center in hopes of that model being used throughout the nation to combat the AIDS crisis. They will assist with "the best quality care and education to persons infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS." Currently they are also working to foster psychological programs in Spanish for children and adolescents. They are indeed doing incredible work there along with other fine organizations. [www.walkingwithchildren.org].

Still 1.5% seems low since there are now places in the Congo in Africa where the HIV/AIDS rate is over 50%. Even still HIV/AIDS is something you must keep track of and work on because if it gets out of control over 6.5 million Hondurans will be at risk, according the World Health Organization.

Difficulties of Getting AID In

With the difficult terrain it is not easy to bring aid into the small villages in rural Honduras. Most supplies must be brought in by four-wheel drive truck over sometimes very treacherous dirt roads. Buses traveling between the large cities often get stuck, relying or hoping for locals with

large draft animals to pull them out. Nearly every four-wheel drive vehicle that makes the journey has shovels in the back or behind the seat. When non-profit groups need to bring in machines or building supplies it is often nearly impossible to get them into the villages and this makes building a slow process.

Often volunteers ride in the back holding down the equipment and or building materials, keeping their arms inside the truck or they get mudded. Still other times they must get out to prevent the vehicle from bogging down in the mud when it gets stuck. *"It is a bumpy ride to say the least"* stated one recent volunteer.

The bumpy ride can damage materials or machines and tools being brought in and it is a long way back to civilization to get replacement parts. Thus a simple job can take weeks and depending on the season, perhaps months to get thru a mountain pass road which is closed due to a landslide. The more remote the village the tougher it becomes. A simple construction project such as building a school, church or miniature sewer treatment plant could take months or sometimes have to wait to be finished season or even next year.



Chapter II

Assistance from North America

Much of the AID that comes into Honduras comes from other countries, although there are many religious groups there that really work hard to help the locals help themselves. As the country's network of churches and organizations grows stronger we see that all the hard work from the volunteers who come from North America is paying off.

Doctors and Medical Missions

Often Hospitals, University Medical Students and practicing doctors will organize groups and come to the rural areas of Honduras to assist people. Many Church groups will also recruit doctors, nurses and medical professionals to come along or have such members already in their groups who will volunteer. The combination of all these medical missions is awesome.

The UB Church is one group that travels to Southern Honduras to the many Mountain Villages, which have little if any medical care. They take with them doctors, medical assistants, physical therapy people, nurses, dentists and EMTs. Like most groups they land at the Capital City of Tegucigalpa and then take buses and sometimes pick-ups into the villages. Volunteers often pay their own way; others are sponsored at \$1200 each. They figure that;

"If at least one physician accompanies the team, we can purchase enough medication to assist with 1000 patients for a very small cost."

Their strategy seems to be paying off as during each medical mission they are assisting more and more people who are in desperate need of medical attention.

Another medical group from Austin Texas from "The St. Williams Medical Missionary Team" which is a private group relying solely on personal donations. They told of some pretty bad cases of infections and about the long lines of those in need of medical help. Due to the high volumes of people needing help things must be set up very quickly turning the building into a drop-in health clinic with lines as far as you can see.

"When we set-up our clinics, we often have very sick and dirty dogs running around "from one office to the other".

Of course the first priority is to make sure the place is sanitized and the dogs need to find something else to do for a while. One medical doctor volunteer, Dr. Nathalie Fiset, explained how their team set things up and how each complimented the other and how they quickly organized to help the onslaught of patients;

"Dr Rudy is always my "left- winger" and I can call upon him anytime I need something complicated explained in Spanish to the mother. I see children and women under 35 years old. There are two other doctors who are seeing adults. Dr Jeff Kroll is a urologist and takes care of the minor surgeries with the material we brought. On an average day we see over 1000 people. I counted one day for fun and realized I had seen over 250 patients. Not a bad day at the office. We have to stop at sun down because we have no electricity and it gets pretty dark to see and diagnose when people show us a rash."

So many of the people in rural Honduras do not understand medicine or how it works. Some think that a magic pill will be given to them. They think that a couple of vitamins will cure their malnutrition. Of course the medical volunteers know it does not work that way, yet still work hard to help any way they can. Some cases are simple others very serious and yet the camaraderie and team work helps them through another long day;

"One of the days, my energy level was very high and I must have seen over 300 people because Rudy was pretty sick and could see less people. Whenever I was done seeing patients, I would walk up to Ray, the man doing circulation and say "LISTA" meaning I am ready and he would send in more people. One time, I walk up to him and I say "lista". He proudly sends in a family of seven. I rapidly see them and send them to pharmacy and walk back to Ray saying; 'Is that the best you can do?'"

After a hard day helping people until it is impossible to see what you are doing any longer due to darkness the team is both amped with energy and exhausted at the same time. Grateful for making it through and physically and mentally drained. Like a group of marathon runners they reflect upon what they had just done, knowing that they need to get some sleep and prepare for the next day and do it all over again. The patients and locals are so appreciative noted one volunteer of the medical team;

"Most people stay with us after the clinic is finished and sing and pray with us returning to their home walking in the dark late at night".

The serious cases are the ones which really take their toll on the volunteers said most of the medical doctors and assistants we interviewed. They all agreed that this is why they volunteered and said that it was lucky they arrived when we did. Each medical team had such stories of how they saved a young child's life. Dr. Nathalie Fiset recalled one serious situation that was beyond their immediate abilities with the equipment and supplies they had brought;

"I had seen a child with severe asthma who was turning blue and losing consciousness. After giving him all the antibiotics, cortisone shots and inhalers we could see he was not getting better. When we told the mother she needed to go to the hospital, she said that was not possible because she had other children to take care of. We managed to arrange for her to get a ride from the only person who had a car and a neighbor would take care of the other children. If this child did not go to the hospital he would have died."

The dental care and assistance needed for Hondurans is also a huge issue, as most people never brush their teeth and at a very young age, they have advanced cavities and teeth rotting to the bone. The dentists who go on these medical missions are doing only extractions-hundreds of them per day. One volunteer working along side a dentist pulling teeth stated;

"They often put me next to the dentist and seeing and hearing all those extractions make me want to "double-brush" my teeth at night!"

Most Honduras people are very tough and often women are breastfeeding while getting their teeth extracted, talk about dedication to motherhood? Of course dentists are a precious commodity for any medical mission to Honduras, as it seems they can never get enough.

There are so many emotional stories about children and their families and the medical assistance that is so desperately needed. Let us share just a few more with you, this one from a medical mission in 2005;

"I have seen so many cases of cerebral palsies, I found it incredible. People take these misfortunes with resignation and carry their crosses. Often, the women do not have pre-natal care, suffer from severe anemia and malnutrition and give birth alone at home. When the birth is complicated and takes long, the baby is often born stillborn and they bury it in their backyard."

The women of rural Honduras are unbelievable and will do whatever it takes for their children, often sacrificing them selves and struggling just to give their children a better life. It is amazing to see that level of commitment and strength of character. Each one deserves a medal of honor for their daily endeavors. You cannot help but feel the raw emotions as you watch them. Nathalie told us these emotional stories after her medical mission journey;

"I saw a woman who was carrying her 8-years old (almost 100 pounds) vegetative gorgeous looking girl for hours to come and see us. We got to talk and I explained to her there was not much I could do for her daughter. I shower her exercises to prevent stiffness and told her what to feed her. The little girl will eventually die soon. The mother told me she had another birth the year before but the baby was stillborn. Her husband who was often absent and could not deal with his wife's pain, was of no support. The woman then told me: "If my little girl dies, I will kill myself!" We hugged and cried together..."



"There was a little girl who had severe burns on all her back and was in bad pain. Jeff [another medical doctor on the team] changed her bandages and gave her a Penicillin shot. The medications we use are the ones we brought and we rapidly run low on the essentials. The people working at pharmacy are awesome and get to be very "creative" in helping as many people as we can. It happened some days that we had to "cut the line" as it was impossible to see everyone. Most people are very understanding and ask us where we will be the next day and start walking towards that direction hoping to be the first ones in line the next day. "

"I saw another old lady who was about 70 years old. She was a widower and complained of back and neck pain. She was accompanied by 3 children. I asked here where their parents were and she answered me "le matar". I

asked her to repeat as I was not sure she really meant someone had killed her daughter. She told me that she had three more children at home. She was sleeping on the dirt floor and at night and had only three tortillas to spread between the children and herself. That got me tears into my eyes. I slipped her some money and told her not to tell anyone as I did not want to start a riot. She hugged me and thanked me deeply. I often think of her and wonder how she is doing."

All volunteers are needed and all types of professional medical people are needed regardless of their specialty. There are so many people that need assistance and the lines of those in need of medical attention are so long that every single person is a valuable member of the medical team and you will be surprised how well you will do and all the good you can bring. Dr. Nathalie Fiset drives the point home in her original reservations;

"To be honest I was a little concerned about doing the missions at first since I only do obstetrics in my medical practice. The cases were so obvious though that I got comfortable the very first day especially when someone comes with diabetes and their sugar levels are at pre-coma levels often, same thing for high blood pressure: the numbers are mind blowing. When the other doctors treat people with diabetes or high blood pressure, they can only provide a couple of day's supplies of medications. We are aware that this will only help to control the disease for a short period of time...until another medical brigade comes along."

Rotary Club and Other Organizations

One Rotary Club, the Morning Time Westlake Rotary Club comes in each year to help kids who are born with crooked feet and help them so they can walk. Rotarians have put forth a huge effort to helping the children of Honduras who are in desperate need, as Hondurans do a lot of walking in their daily lives, without foot power an individual is literally powerless. The Rotary Club has a big presence in Honduras and draws support from the entire Western Hemisphere.

Several other groups including Engineers without Borders have come into Honduras to help build infrastructure and are planning to build projects such as sewer treatment facilities, schools and bridges. There are some issues to deal with in getting help into these countries for engineers. One volunteer tells of a discussion with a group from Engineers without Borders;

"I have met on the plane a group who was going to build churches in Guatemala. The man was telling me they had a lot of trouble going through customs and security with their power drills and saws, etc."

There are also Veterinary Teams who come for special missions to tend to the animals in rural Honduras, as the family animals provide milk, eggs, food and animal power is needed, as most are too poor to afford cars, trucks or tractors and there is often no place to get fuel or parts even if they did have those things. Many more vets are needed for those very important missions.

What kinds of animals do they have in rural Honduras? Just about every kind you can think of actually. For instance one Veterinary Team from Texas has had huge success and since they have been coming around many report that their animal losses are almost nil due to the great care. They tend to over 4600 cattle and various other animals such as; oxen, horses, donkeys, dogs, cats, pigs, goats, sheep, assorted birds, and an occasional coatimundi. What is a coatimundi?



This is a Coatimundi

UNICEF and US AID

UNICEF, a part of the United Nations has been instrumental in assisting on getting aid monies in and seeing that the money goes towards helping poor kids. One of the biggest issues is that the children are often malnourished because the families cannot afford to get the food they need. UNICEF has been active in Central America with the primary focus on helping children. It appears that UNICEF is working to secure funding for assistance in Honduras to help children there; <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/honduras.html>

Thankfully USAID has put forth a herculean effort in Honduras and it is making a big difference in the quality of life there. One major component USAID is working on is strengthening the rule of law to prevent crime and insure accountability and transparency in government affairs. Over the last 40 years USAID has provided 2 Billion Dollars in economic assistance in Honduras. The many objectives of USAID to support Honduras have been clear.

USAID has worked to help Honduras diversify its agricultural production and expand exports to help its economy and provide jobs. USAID also has initiatives to help small business enterprises through micro-loans. USAID is concerned with the sanitary conditions and has made it an objective to increase access to health services. One important focus has been vocational training and education to help break the cycle of poverty in Honduras. USAID is very concerned with assisting Hondurans in having a democratic government.

USAID has also listed objectives such as maintaining a sustainable environment and improving food security. USAID along with 16 other donor nations provided assistance after the devastation caused from Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Their latest plan which extends thru 2008 has strong stated objectives to assisting Honduras and her people towards a better standard of living and on-going economic vitality. <http://www.usaid.gov/hn/aboutusaid.htm>

Religious Organizations

Many believe that the brunt of the assistance to the rural poor in Honduras comes from religious organizations and their self-less acts of kindness, although there are some non-religious groups who are pretty spectacular in their own right. One religious affiliated medical mission group volunteer stated that;

"Often, people admit that they like us so much that they will walk to the other clinic planned for the next day and bring their father or nieces. Most people we saw are convinced Catholics, as is our group."

Still with all these other groups helping there are philanthropists that take it upon themselves to put together other organizations to help where additional help is needed, often filling in the gaps. The efforts in Honduras are addressing the challenges and making a difference. In fact more and more groups are working together to get better coverage and prevent duplication of efforts and this is helping tremendously.

There is a little bit of friendly rivalry between some organizations to see which group can help the most people. Perhaps a little bit of team spirit amongst the volunteers is good. The goal of course is helping the rural poor in Honduras and their children with what they need to survive and improve their quality of living and education and help them help themselves. This will break the cycle of poverty.

By having many groups with diverse focuses and niches using the expertise and talent in their groups the quality of help being provided in Honduras is astounding. It is amazing listening to all the genuine folks who really care and how much they are accomplishing. Even more incredible is the progress being made one patient at a time, one village at a time and one child at a time. If you find yourself with enough time on your hands to make the trip as a volunteer to Honduras you will be glad you did. If you have a few extra dollars to donate, I cannot think of a better cause.

Success in Action and Humanity at Its Finest

The amount of good going into Honduras can be attributed to the caring folks of North America and the various religious and non-religious organizations and groups, which have taken an interest in assisting the wonderful folks who live there. Volunteers and private groups are making a big contribution. Most folks who go on a mission to help in Honduras do so with their own money, as one medical team volunteer told us;

"When I go on a medical mission, people naively ask me how much they pay me. The overall costs are my airplane ticket \$1000 volunteer donation of \$500 to the group and \$500 in expenses for various materials."

There is much aid going into Honduras and many of the challenges are being met, still there is a lot more work to do. The progress is obvious for those who are observing and keeping track and it is very appreciated as one of the alumni volunteers of a University Team stated in an interview;

"The first year I went to Honduras, I could not believe the poverty having grown up in the Los Angeles suburbs, but each year going back to the same villages I noted the progress and watched how the Hondurans had more self-confidence and they were building for themselves and most of all they had smiles, that makes me smile too, everyone should go to Honduras at least once in their life"

There have been huge successes documented in research projects and by volunteer organizations assisting the rural poor in Honduras. John Ellett, the Chairman and Founder of Austin Helps Honduras, formed a partnership with a local organization, Club Rotario of Juticalpa, which he feels led to the success of our efforts. He states;

"Building a long-term commitment and relationships in the Colonia, versus a "one and done" project approach, have made a real difference."

They have sent numerous medical mission teams into Honduras, assisted in building and construction projects, education, you name it and they even built a sewer treatment plant! They also have a scholarship fund and a "can do" board of directors, a very impressive group that is leading by example in helping the poor in Honduras, which have been working with many different organizations, some religious and some not. It is an awesome effort to make a difference in Honduras. Well that is what the people there think;



[www.AustinHelpsHonduras.org]

The extraordinary folks of any of these groups and organizations who give of themselves to travel to Honduras to help people there are some of the greatest people in the World. They pay to go and bring with them the talent, expertise and supplies to make a difference.

Dr. Nathalie Fiset explained to us the joy that was experienced by Hondurans by such simple things and how that made such a huge impact, psychological difference and brought smiles to the faces of those who most needed an emotional uplift;

"Often after seeing a person, they hug us and thank us sincerely. I like to hand-out little gifts to the mothers and children. I was surprised to realize that the little colorful plastic necklaces I had bought at the dollar store are craved by women and sometimes I need my mission chief to come and "rescue" me from the riot it caused. I often run out of gifts before the end of the day."

Chapter III

More Volunteers Needed



Much has been done and good progress is being made and yet there is still so much more to do. What is needed now are not just more bodies to help and more money, but also specific expertise; those who know how to build, how to teach, how to grow crops, how to design and how to organize.

As the poverty is slowly eliminated and the living conditions are up-graded more specific help will be needed. Surely you have a skill or certain expertise that is needed. Perhaps you have some time to volunteer. If not perhaps you can donate supplies for one of the trips or browse an organization's needed items list so you can do your part.

If you cannot make the trip then look into what you might be able to do or consult your personal finances and see if you can donate some money towards a specific group or sponsor someone else to go. We all have resources that can make a difference and Honduras is not short on need.

Preparation

Before going on a mission, everyone must get all the necessary shots and take anti-malaria pills. Even so, if you happen to be on a medical mission you will get sick from seeing so many people who are sick. Also realize the very poor sanitary conditions compared to those in the United States or Canada. Of course anytime one travels abroad to any third world country they need to catch up on their shots. One organization that frequently travels to Honduras recommends that you check with your doctor to see that your immunizations are up to date at least four weeks prior to your departure to Honduras. Here is a partial list that the use;

- Hepatitis A and B Vaccines (B may take six months to complete)
- Influenza Shots if in season
- DT Booster (vaccines against Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis)
- Oral Polio Booster
- Typhoid
- Malaria Prevention, Chloroquine 500 mg
- Prophylaxis with Aralen Tablets (take once per week in country)

The Hepatitis A vaccine is good for 5 years and after the second vaccine for 20 years. Hepatitis B after third vaccine not needed again. DT is good for 10 years. Typhoid oral is generally good for 5 years. An Influenza shot is a one year protection.

Of course you must have a passport and you need to consider other essentials you will need. When you land in the capital city you will need some money even if your group has accommodations already figured out. Money for food and souvenirs is important and if you are not a shop-tell-you-drop type you can get by with \$40-50. Once in rural Honduras there are no restaurants or gift shops! Are there ATMs? Yes a few in the larger cities, but the exchange rates are not too good. You must remember you are going to a "Third World" Country. Perhaps you might read this page; <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1922.htm#travel>

What else should you bring?

Well here are the recommendations from Austin Diocese Medical Mission Volunteers;

- A Fanny Pack - to carry personal items in the field
- A Roll of Toilet Paper and Handy Wipes
- Sun Screen and Chap stick
- Personal Medicines - labeled prescriptions and over the counter medicines only
- Towels, Bed Sheets, Shower Thongs, Soap, Shampoo
- Water Drinking Bottle - Your group should be able to fill this up with fresh safe water
- Insect Repellant
- Hat or Cap
- Flashlight - shake-able or extra batteries
- Rain Gear - plastic poncho type works well
- Camera and Film - *see below
- Light Jacket
- Layered Type Clothes, Jump Suits, Jeans, T-Shirts (shorts are not typical)
- More Formal Clothes if with a religious group for church services

*Digital camera batteries run out and thus you will need an additional battery pack to use between charging opportunities. Honduras uses the same types of plugs, as the US where electricity is available.

Most volunteers want to know if they have to be able to speak Spanish. Well it certainly helps although many volunteers go with only some Spanish Speaking skills, yet by the time they return they can have improved greatly. It is often suggested that if you plan on going to buy some tapes or a CD Rom Spanish Lessons for your car and listen to them and practice up on your conversational Spanish prior to your departure date for your volunteer mission. Nathalie told us;

*"I was also concerned about not being able to speak and understand Spanish having taken only a few classes. I did ask not to get an interpreter. Total immersion is the best way to learn and Dr Rudy was always there to help me in case of complicated situations and to give me a second opinion. These missions also helped me learn Spanish. On the first morning of the mission, Francisco a friend asked me how many languages I spoke. I said two and a half. By the end of the day, I told Francisco; ask me how many languages I speak? **Two and three quarters!!**"*

One very important thing you will need is your passport to get back to the US and/or identification papers to get into Honduras.

Security and Safety

One of the questions people most commonly ask is; ***Is it Safe to Travel to Honduras?*** The answer is yes if you are in a group and stick with your plan and stay heads up and pay attention. As they say there is safety in numbers and Honduras is a lot safer than many other Central American Countries.

Still there is a bit of crime in Honduras and a drug issue as well. Honduras has some guerilla activity at times and sometimes one hears a glimpse of their activities from the locals who are quite fearful and refuse to talk about it. It makes sense for all volunteers to mind their own business and do the job they have come to do, to help people.

Sometimes volunteers will comment on things they see such as a Pepsi Truck delivering soda to a gas station which is accompanied by an armed guard carrying a machine gun. Often they strap themselves to the outside to stay in position. Pepsi is a very popular brand apparently? Many stores in town also have armed guards, as well.

One seasoned traveler and volunteer to Honduras gives some very good advice on traveling in Honduras;

"I definitely do not recommend traveling alone in those countries as often our bus would get stopped and we sent one of the locals or the priest or nun in our group to talk to them and we got our passage. Traveling alone can prove very dangerous. We also hired local drivers as they know the roads and the dangers and how to avoid them."

Travel Awareness and Access



When volunteering to help out in Honduras it makes sense to go with a group that has gone before or with a group which has many folks who have previously gone before, as they know the ropes. Going alone is a really bad idea and is not recommended so please make a note of that. There are also several travel organizations that can assist in helping with itineraries and allow the volunteers to get some sight seeing in, along with their philanthropic work and desire to help the wonderful people and their children in Honduras. What are the airlines that most recommended, which fly to Honduras? These are the companies we heard most often;

- Continental Airlines
- Delta Airlines
- Taca Airlines

Most all those who have gone before advise new folks that they must remember that they are in another country and things do not work the same way. One volunteer said that they once had to reprimand one of their volunteers for acting a little too arrogant and forgetting where he was, there is simply no place for that behavior while traveling in Honduras. Police are heavily armed and things are much different, something that most World Travelers are use to although it is a little intimidating for first time travelers to Honduras.

Remember of course first you have to get to Honduras and then after resting, after the flight, the real traveling begins, up and down mountains on dirt roads into the remote rural regions of beautiful Honduras. One volunteer notes;

"We landed in Tegucigalpa [capital city] and I learned afterwards this is one of the steepest landing patterns you can imagine. When we returned, we took off in Tegucigalpa and needed to land a couple of minutes later to refuel in the next city as we were not aloud to take-off with full fuel tanks in Tegucigalpa [due to the extra weight of the jet fuel] as the rise is too steep and if you miss, you get to meet the mountains face to face. It was exciting!"

Well that is a little insight into the flying part of your journey into and out of the Capital City of Honduras. If this sounds exciting to you also, then this is just the start of the fun, as the volunteer continues during our interview;

"Once we arrived at the airport, we had a long bus ride of about 8 hours on bumpy roads. Right outside the airport, people started jumping on us asking for money and gifts."

That is not really an issue at the airport itself, as the airport is heavily guarded by the Honduran Military to protect tourists, trade and prevent any problems. One medical volunteer stated that during her first mission in 2005;

"We went to Catacamas, at the airport we saw many other volunteer teams going in other parts of Honduras. Since every team has its specific t-shirts - ours were 'yellow' it was kind of funny to see all the different group of people with colored t-shirts. I told my group: 'You think we are going on a medical mission but we are in a reality TV show! We are playing against the red, the blue and the green teams.' Everyone smiled"

Once out of the city things of course change drastically and the ground transportation is quite a bit slower than the interstates that those in the United States are use too. One medical mission volunteer recounts;

"Every morning we hop on the bus and ride through bumpy roads and get to where we are setting-up our clinic and most of the time we set-up our clinic in churches or schools. We are a team of doctors, dentists, nurses, translators and support help working at the pharmacy and crowd control."

Organized Groups

The more pre-planning that is done in advance with all the proper knowledge needed will insure a much more enjoyable and safer journey. The ability to spend time wisely helping the rural poor of Honduras rather than spinning your wheels literally in the mud crossing of some of the most ominous mountain terrain in Central America is a big efficiency booster.

In the cities of course it is safer to remain in groups because you are in a totally different country and it is not your domain. The rural areas are so much different and the organized medical groups who volunteer to help the rural poor with their urgent health care needs note that it is all about team work.

"One of the best feelings is that we really work as a team. We support each other and no-one has an ego. There are some returning members and there are newcomers. The group spirit makes the newcomers feel right at home rapidly."

Basic Living Conditions

For those who have already been to Honduras in the past they will warn you that rural life is very rudimentary and certainly nothing close to living in a housing tract in the suburbs of the US Middle Class. The water has parasites in it and it is sometimes polluted so you will need to drink your own bottled water. They do not have air-conditioning and generally there are virtually no sewer systems anywhere in rural Honduras, although that will be changing as more are built in the future based on the previous successes of a couple of projects.

Dr. Nathalie Fiset explained a little bit about the wild-life and insects to help us get a better idea of what someone might expect to see as she told us some great stories. Reminding us that in rural Honduras humans live right up against nature and side by side with it;

"We do encounter some form of wildlife: there was a big toad on the wall in church. Dr Braden had to "squish" a scorpion in his shower. There are smaller toads in our bathroom. One night, the other girls started screaming and I went to help them. On the wall, there was the cutest little green frog with very long legs and fingers like suction cups. I took a broom but when I touched it, it jump ten feet away on the other wall. Cool!"

Nature never lets you forget where you are and it takes a little getting use to at first but after a while it is kind of fun wondering what you will see next? Memories worth a lifetime many admit afterwards.

"Whenever I can, I set up my net over my bed as I am not comfortable knowing there is a lot of "circulation". Michelle one of our excellent helpers did not bother and woke up suddenly in the middle of the night saying "THAT was a bug!" on her face. The grasshoppers are the size of a deck of cards sometimes."

One thing is for sure and a real positive point is that when you get back to civilization after a volunteer mission you will realize how lucky you are and a warm bath feels like heaven! Of course most of the showers are cold and one volunteer notes;

"Were we live there is only cold water and one of the girls always cried loudly before getting in the shower - It was kind of funny, women sleep in one dormitory and men sleep in the other."

The people in the village live with the chickens, pigs and mules running around in and out of the houses and at first that takes a little getting use to. You definitely know you are in another country and that life is much different as you look around. Sometimes you can hear monkeys making noises in the trees and it echoes sometimes while traveling through the canyons.

Common Misconceptions

One of the points in this book is to alleviate some of the many misconceptions that people have about Honduras and perhaps we should start with the long lines that medical aid workers often experience as people walk for miles to visit the volunteer nurses, doctors and their assistants. There are a lot of people in need and this creates huge lines. Even though the medical mission teams go to remote areas this does not mean that there are only a few people to help at each village or stop as a Family Doctor from Canada on a medical mission in Rural Honduras states;

"I am surprised to see that on our way, we go through mountains and isolated roads but when we arrive at the locations for our clinic, there are already hundreds of people waiting to be seen. Many of the local people have been walking for hours sometimes days to get there. They patiently wait outside in a very tight line under the sun. Many women are breastfeeding while standing in line. It happens frequently that a person faints from dehydration and heat stroke."

The villages are quite gracious and not everyone is without. Some homes have electricity from their own sources. Even the wealthiest person in the village does have a lot but still they are wealthy by rural Honduras standards and one volunteer was surprised to learn during her trip on a mission to Honduras that often;

"When it is time to eat lunch, the richest person of the village opens her house to us and feeds us local food. They are very proud to offer whatever little they have. The meals are mainly composed of "frijoles" (beans), tortillas and papas (potatoes). For us we get extra like chicken, pork and beef but eating meat is rare for them."

Some people think that the government in Honduras does not care about its people. This is not true at all. One medical mission team told of a story in 2006;

"We were very happy to learn that the first lady was coming to see one of our mission day. It took us over two hours of very rough roads from our already remote location to get there. Our jaw dropped when she "fell off the sky form of the helicopter" so much for realizing the isolation. She seemed genuinely interested and asked me "What are the health problems of my people?"

What Can You Do?

There are so many ways to help in Honduras, such as sponsoring a child, donating items on the list of needs of groups planning trips or giving money. Most of all donating your time will do the most good, especially if you have skills, such as medical knowledge, engineering background or educational experience. Of course all the wonderful groups helping in Honduras need money.

In the back of this book you will find a list of groups and organizations that you can send money too or volunteer to work with, so you can do your part to help the poor in rural Honduras. Browse through the lists of needs, items, donation requests and volunteer jobs on their various websites and see what you can give to assist in the mission to help in Honduras.

The fact is that everyone can help: either by donating money, time or joining a group. Those who come back from their volunteer efforts in Honduras explain how it has changed their perspective and their lives in so many ways. Often without realizing it, those of us in the first world often take things for granted, so at times we forget how good we have it and go about our daily lives without even thinking. Bunny Oliver with Austin Helps Honduras brings this point home;

"I have made seven trips since 2000, so I've been watching the children of Colonia Solidaridad grow up. One of the people [Linda] on our trip in February had been on the first trip in 1999 to build the houses in the colonia after Hurricane Mitch had left so many homeless. The people had been living in cardboard and plywood shacks on the banks of the river before the hurricane, and even that had been washed away. Some of them had moved out to the hill which had been donated for the houses and were living under trees with cardboard propped against them for shelter. Now they have modest houses with water, lights, sewer, and a beautiful elementary school right in the colonia. Linda's comment was that when she was there before, they had no hope, and now their children and grandchildren are going to school, and with the scholarships, they can even go beyond the government-paid 6th grade. We've had three of the scholarship students graduate from high school--an impossibility before. Several have graduated from vocational schools and now have jobs."

Chapter IV

What is Needed for Future Sustainability in Honduras?

The list of needs is a long one, but each year it is getting shorter as volunteer teams are shoring up the leaks and reducing poverty and improving the lives and health of Hondurans. Of course with all this progress the larger projects are now needed. Building schools, sewer treatment plants, bridges and buildings are a major need in both the small towns and in rural Honduras. With these items the rural poor can live safely and have the tools they need to improve their lives, educate their families and live a more comfortable life.

What is desperately needed are things to help with issues of;

- Water filtration
- Water Retention
- Better hygiene
- Current electricity
- Outdoor Stoves (toxic fumes harmful to the lungs)
- Sewer Treatment
- Schools
- Roadways
- Security
- Small Micro-Enterprises
- Stronger Buildings
- Health Clinics

Agriculture

Agriculture, farming and livestock are another big need in the rural regions of Honduras. Helping a family with a farm animal can be one of the greatest gifts. Veterinarian volunteer services are doing a terrific job and more are needed.

Not all of Honduras is made for farming due to the interior terrain, but much is. The low-lying areas with many huge fertile valleys host giant banana plantations. But this is not the case in all of the lowlands. Some areas which are extremely fertile due to 1000s of years of erosion from the mountains means good top soil and farmland on the flat areas, unfortunately due to improper land use often these are the areas people choose to live on and build on rather than farm. In turn run off from these areas erodes and pollutes even more potential farmland.

As the urban areas expand there are more people and less ideal areas to farm. The timber and logging industry in some places causes quickened erosion exacerbating the problems there, thus a better understanding needs to be considered in the decision-making process of where to farm and where to build.

Diversity of agriculture is also important, the more types of crops that can be planted the better the diets and the less issue with healthcare. Just about anything grows well in Honduras, with the wide range of climate. Farming techniques need to be taught and more vocational education in agriculture is needed for those living in the rural areas. Agriculture training is needed and education to realize that their diet is lacking a lot of nutrients contributing to poor health.

Safety and Security

Living without fear is very important for the rural poor in Honduras and by building their villages strong and helping them build up their communities and help all of Honduras lay down the rule of law, will increase the safety and security of all Hondurans.

There is a bit of crime in the cities and there is the ever present danger of an uprising or political unrest from political opposition. Those who live in rural Honduras need to be free from worry of these issues. This will assist them from getting their goods to market and trading without worry of being hijacked in route or robbed. With improved transparency and accountability from government this too will help improve life in Honduras.

Health Upgrades

There are big concerns still on the healthcare issues in Honduras, especially in rural Honduras. Better oral hygiene is needed because most do not brush their teeth. Many children already have their teeth rotting out. Education is needed and the continued efforts of dispensing toothbrushes and toothpaste which is being done very successfully currently on a small scale. This is a great achievement and more must be done. It will require additional funding and resources. It is imperative.

Continued support and funding for contraception is another smart move. The government needs a set of educational programs to be made available to be taught in the schools and through the church. By providing birth control methods-pills, intra-uterine devices, condoms, etc this will help in two ways. One it will slow the birth rate and population increase right now at 2.4% and it will slow the spread of HIV/AIDS as well. This of course meets with a little bit of conflict from a religious perspective although these issues must be addressed and the dialogue must continue.

Now that the volunteer groups are making progress on the rural poor healthcare issues, the efforts need to be maintained at the village level, slowing the birth rate will help in many ways and it will reduce poverty too. Some mothers just cannot feed their many children and this prevents the children from growing up healthy and nourished. Thus, the continued cycle of poverty is on-going. Such realities need to be addressed say many of the volunteers who come back after assisting in rural Honduras.

Education



The building of schools is a major step in the right direction and it will indeed help in breaking the cycle of poverty in rural Honduras. As more and more classrooms are being built students for the first time in all their past generations will now be able to read and write. Greater needs for transportation for children who live far away from a school are also needed. The parents also need to value school and education more as a tool to better their life and their children's future.

Since the church is entrenched in the daily lives of the rural poor many Churches have set up schools. Vocational training also needs to be taught. Information on how to make things, how to build stuff must also be taught. So they can build their roads safer with strong bridges, durable homes, schools and sewer treatment facilities, septic systems and buried leach lines; also how to build water retention systems, wells and deal with water filtration. All these things should be taught to the males growing up.

By creating vocational training programs on how to maintain a sustainable environment, run a small farm and care for a family the poverty problems will be a thing of the past. Just teaching the rural poor to read and write is not enough, they must be taught how to maintain and grow and taught to fish, as one expert of human habitats and civilizations told us.

What many do not realize is that as we speak right now there are volunteer teams building more schools and training teachers. There is a huge amount of progress being made and things are moving forward and appear to be on the right track. Of course more money is needed, more supplies need to be donated and more teachers will need to volunteer to train the next generation of Honduran teachers to accomplish this goal.

Solar Power, Geothermal, Biowaste & Hydro

Out in the mountainous terrain of rural Honduras bringing in electricity is not an easy task. Setting the country up on a power grid is simply not feasible at all. There are other opportunities however. In the dry season solar power is possible as there is less fog or clouds. In the wet season those who live by rivers, tributaries or streams could use small, inexpensive, simple hydro-electric systems or make energy from bio-waste from both humans and animals.

In some parts of Honduras there is ample potential for making geothermal energy there is a lot of energy under the country there and it often causes seismic and volcanic activity in that region of Central America. The energy needs of the growing nation must be considered. Areas near the coast might wish to use ocean wave technology to create energy or a combination of energy sources and then feed that out into the smaller cities and towns.

Rural areas will be on their own of course and they will need to conserve their energy needs while using simple technology, which is easy to maintain and highly efficient. There are enough simple technologies out there to make this feasible and new research on the horizon to find even more and bring those technologies to market for out of the way places such as rural Honduras.



The new schools that are built will also need power, solar power makes the most sense. An inexpensive unit on wheels could provide power for the school on weekdays and the church in the village on Sundays or be moved as needed to the buildings in the center of a village.

Luckily with all the rivers and water flows, Honduras also has an abundant opportunity for hydro-electric power, but that is not possible everywhere in rural Honduras. Many of the open sewage pits could be designed to create energy from bio-waste, as when you are in remote regions it makes sense that nothing go to waste.

Internet Access



Crossing the digital divide is something that is considered very important and each year as technology advances in the world it will become more and more crucial. Most of the volunteers who go and give of their time to volunteer in Honduras do not believe that the people there need the Internet, but they wish it was available for communication while they were there. Of course everyone agrees that in the future it will be essential to have Internet access and that at least the schools should have Internet available.

Luckily Hughes has a Satellite that is Internet Enabled about 200 miles off the coast Southwest of San Diego, straight up in Geo-sync. The coverage footprint could easily service all of Honduras and this could provide Internet access to anywhere in rural Honduras with only a satellite dish on top of a school. Of course this will cost money, but if the whole village can use one Internet account and the Country can pay for this with a group rate then communication will be possible anywhere. Now that is crossing the digital divide direct to the PC in the rural country.

By providing this in the rural schools the students can hook into the Quorum and Pangea Projects for social networking and eLearning online with other students around the world. This means they will have all the Internet access needed to learn how to build their villages, start businesses, get design plans and solve their own challenges in rural Honduras, a place that some people say is the middle of nowhere and rarely get anyone who has ever been there to disagree with that statement.

Chapter V

Plans for The Future

There are numerous plans for the future of Honduras and most of them now seem perfectly feasible. In fact as time goes on both religious volunteer groups and non-religious organizations are getting bolder in their projects and missions. Why? Because they have been experiencing so much success that they are no longer intimidated by robust long-term goals or what others call impossible dreams. They have already done the impossible indeed they are doing it every day.

Clearing House for Donated Materials

When asked to look at all the hard work that the many different groups helping in Honduras were doing, The Online Think Tank proposed that a computerized clearing house be established and perhaps run by "Austin Helps Honduras" or another neutral group. Each of the groups going on missions could post what they needed and citizens could offer to send in such items.

The clearing house could be set up on an "e-Bay" type platform, only where no money was exchanged. Volunteers with certain expertise could list their skills and resumes to be placed on a team that could do the most good. Items could be shipped to a warehouse located presumably in San Antonio or an area nearby that was donated space from a Corporate Sponsor. Perhaps, it might be located near a UPS Terminal to make it easy to collect shipments. You see, as the Online Think Tank group stated;

"Many of the items that are needed in Rural Honduras are things that you and I would commonly throw away, I know most of us would be glad to send those items if we knew they could do some good for our neighbors in the South...Corporations might be willing to donate other items for tax deductions and PR reasons as well. I certainly cannot think of a better cause, it's clearly a win-win for all concerned."

Each group going in to assist on a mission needs to survey and figure out what is needed and then get online and post it along with the location where it is needed. This will improve the supply chain and efficiency. With a supply chain in place much more will be possible at a much faster pace to assist the rural poor, their children and their future education. Perhaps a warehouse might be run in country as well or a drop off point run by the Honduras Rotary Club or Honduras Catholic Church and once the various groups arrived in Honduras, their material would be waiting for them, safe and sound.

Skilled Expertise

Skilled expertise is needed in Honduras, especially in the rural areas, unfortunately with unemployment so low in the United States those with lots of expertise rarely have time to ditch the rat race of civilization to take the time off needed to do something special for the rural poor of Honduras. It is clear after all the interviews done for this book that people do care very much and they want to do as much as they physically can to help.

By using a data base of skilled people to draw from for assistance most of the missions could be fully staffed and Industry Associations would also promote these efforts in their Trade Journals and websites with links to the online clearing house. The Industry Associations could promote their Corporate Efforts and adopt various organizations and enjoy the Public Relations.

Simple - Inexpensive Technologies

There has been much mention for the need for computers and equipment in Honduras as well. Once strong ties with industry have been made and the associations which represent them; when supplies, computers or equipment was available or surplus existed it would have a much better chance in getting to where it needs to be, so that it can be put to good use. Our nation has abundance and overflows that are desperately needed in Honduras right now.

One thing that people do not understand is that without electricity many of the things we think that people in the rural areas of Honduras need they cannot use due to the lack of power or electricity. However, with a clearing house the exact needs and specifications can be posted and those listed items have a much better chance of being found and united with the non-profit mission groups to Honduras which seek them.

Indeed perhaps eBay might develop such a system as part of a pilot program to help give back? Maybe Dell Corporation in Texas might offer use of their IT system, website or servers and assist in collecting trade-in computer electronics, which could be donated.

The Clearing House system should also seek those with expertise and know-how, even plans and designs for simple systems for sewer treatment, energy making devices, water filtration and building designs using local brick, concrete and/or wood. With 100s of plans a Honduras Mission team can look to find one which is most suited for the project for a particular village during their next visit.

Companies with Solutions

Due to the overwhelming and sometimes unbelievable amount of giving that goes on from the generous people of North America and the US Government we find that entrepreneurs are constantly coming up with solutions to conquer the challenges of the world. There are small solar units, water filtration systems, heating units and mechanical tools capable of simplifying life in Honduras and creating conditions for safer health and abundance towards quality of life.

MIT has announced \$100 laptop computers and there are now companies that can turn sewage water into fresh water and make energy off the waste. There are folks who recycle old swimming pool filters and modify them turning the units into water purifiers sufficient enough to provide drinkable water for a whole village. It is time we put all these ideas to work. From low-tech to high-tech solutions, we must remember if we want to win the race, we're going to have to use the whole track. Please consider all this and think about ***How You Can Help in Honduras!***

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- 2.) Hurricane Mitch and the Livelihoods of the Rural Poor in Honduras ;
[http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/LAC/LACInfoClient.nsf/49a0102e9b95cf028525664b006a17a4/31fa2416db0f12b585256ae80048df8f/\\$FILE/Mitch_WD_v3.pdf](http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/LAC/LACInfoClient.nsf/49a0102e9b95cf028525664b006a17a4/31fa2416db0f12b585256ae80048df8f/$FILE/Mitch_WD_v3.pdf)
- 3.) Rural Poverty in Latin America; Determinants and Exit Paths;
<http://www-agecon.ag.ohio-state.edu/class/AEDE840/kraybill/readings/de%20janvry%20and%20sadoulet.pdf>
- 4.) The Impact of "Market Friendly" on Credit and Land Markets in Honduras...;
<http://www.basis.wisc.edu/live/NICA%20papers/boucher%20et%20al.pdf>
- 5.) Organizational Development and Natural Resource Management: Evidence Honduras;
<http://dlc.dlib.indiana.edu/archive/00000900/00/penderj150402.pdf>
- 6.) Non-Farm Income and Employment in Rural Honduras;
<http://aisgut.web.wesleyan.edu/papers/Hnd98.v5.pdf>
- 7.) The Emergence of Political Priority for Safe Motherhood in Honduras;
<http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/jrshiffman/Papers/Honduras%20paper%20-%20HP&P%20Draft%203.1.pdf>
- 8.) Honduras Towards a Christian Understanding;
<http://www.aas.duke.edu/trinity/housecrs/document/spring04/honduras.pdf>
- 9.) Recruitment and Motivation of Personnel at Non-profit Medical Honduras;
<http://haas.stanford.edu/files/Fohner%20Thesis%205-30-06.pdf>
- 10.) Political History and Safe Motherhood in Honduras and Guatemala;
<http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/jrshiffman/Political%20history%20and%20safe%20motherhood%20disparities%20between%20Guatemala%20and%20Honduras.pdf>

- 11.) The Mineral Industries of Belize, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador;
<http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country/2000/camer00.pdf>
- 12.) Geothermal and Honduras Country Update;
http://www.geothermie.de/egec-geothernet/ci_prof/america/honduras/honduras.pdf
- 13.) Crisis and Appeal from UNICEF After Hurricane Stan;
http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/files/Crisis_Appeal_Central_America_20oct05.pdf
- 14.) USAID Strengthening the Rule of Law in Honduras;
<http://www.usaid.gov/hn/responsivegovernance.htm>

Non-Profit Religious Missions to Honduras

- 1.) Walking With Children Foundation for Honduras;
<http://www.walkingwithchildren.org/wwc.html>
- 2.) Church of United Brethren (USA);
<http://www.ub.org/events/2007HondurasMedical/index.html>
- 3.) Episcopal Church of Austin Texas helping in Honduras;
<http://www.emmf.com/honduras.htm> ;
<http://www.hondurasbrigade.org/pages/Medical%20Clinic.htm> ;
<http://sunset.backbone.olemiss.edu/~sasisson/medical.html> ;
<http://www.allsaintstupelo.com/hondurasmmnews.htm> ;
http://www.stfrancistemple.org/mission_honduras.htm
- 4.) Honduras Medical Dental Mission;
<http://www.medicaldental.org/>
- 5.) South MacArthur Church of Christ Irving Texas;
http://www.southmac.org/new/honduras_missions/ ;
<http://www.southmac.org/media/files/Honduras%20Mission.pdf>
- 6.) After Hurricane Mitch Crisis in Honduras;
<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/indepth/9910inde/indebt1.htm>

- 7.) Rotary Club of Honduras and Discussion Forum;
<http://www.projecthonduras.com/rotary/rotaryhonduras/>

Media, NGOs and Internet Articles:

- 1.) Medical Mission to Honduras Video by Volunteer (quite good);
<http://nathfiset.zippyvideos.com/> ;
<http://www.sharkle.com/member/nathfiset/?sortby=views&sortorder=ASC>
- 2.) Operation Foot Print - The Steps to a New Life - Club Foot (excellent);
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hcv4tD969hY>
- 3.) Private Website of Great Value for All Considering a Medical Mission;
www.mymedicalmissions.com
- 4.) City Life in Honduras;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPM6GAwITxo>
- 5.) Austin Helps Honduras;
<http://www.austinhelphonduras.org/home.html>
- 6.) Building and Construction to Help Honduras;
<http://www.missionhonduraslemars.org/medicalinfo.shtml>
- 7.) Operation Smiles in Honduras (total success);
<http://www.operationsmile.org/missions/reports/?country=HN>
- 8.) International Health Service and KONR Radio;
http://www.k0nr.com/rwite/IHS_Mission.html
- 9.) Lowell General Hospital to Honduras;
<http://www.lowellgeneral.org/go/about-lgh/ways-to-give/medical-mission-honduras>
- 10.) Students Take Action on a Medical Mission to Honduras;
http://hsc.utoledo.edu/depts/stuaff/stulif/honduras/honduras_1.html#top
- 11.) Pepperdine University Honduras Mission;
<http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/internationalprograms/programs/Summer/honduras.htm>
- 12.) How to Organize Your Own Trip;
<http://www.hondurasmissiontrips.org/index.html>

- 13.) Villanova Mission Trips to Honduras;
<http://www49.homepage.villanova.edu/shawn.gross/Honduras/index.htm>
- 14.) Mobile Libraries Serving Rural Honduras Discussed;
http://www.worlib.org/vol03no1/smith_v03n1.shtml
- 15.) UNICEF Chart of Activities in Honduras thru 2011;
<http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Honduras-matrix.pdf> ;
<http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/06-PL47-Honduras.pdf>

Online Links to Honduras and Missions - Pictures Worth 1000s Words;

- 1.) <http://www.sharkle.com/member/nathfiset/?sortby=views&sortorder=ASC> ;
<http://nathfiset.zippyvideos.com/>
- 2.) <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tellinghistory/sets/72157594254342466/>
- 3.) http://www.merlinslens.com/main.php?g2_itemId=1367
- 4.) http://www.cfrhonduras.com/Gallery/Medical_Mission_May06/index.htm
- 5.) <http://www.friendships.org/Videos.html>
- 6.) http://www.barharborucc.org/honduras_photos.htm
- 7.) http://www.standrewseguin.org/honduras_mission.html
- 8.) <http://fumcor.org/templates/System/details.asp?id=33585&PID=373202>
- 9.) <http://www.pbase.com/lygurl337/image/19182102>
- 10.) http://cfrhonduras.com/Life_of_the_Friars/Honduras_Mission.htm
- 11.) <http://grove.ufl.edu/~gcl/honduras/index.htm>

Geography of Honduras

(The Republic of Honduras)

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1922.htm>

Where is Honduras?



Honduras is in Central America

This is a Map of Honduras



Cities of Honduras

Tegucigalpa
San Pedro Sula
Tela La Ceiba
Olanchito
Danli
Choluteca

Santa Rosa de
Copan
Siguatepeque
La Lima
El Progreso
Comayagua

Victoria
Yorito
Agalteca
Talanga
San Luis
Puerto Cortes

Iriona
Las Vegas
Lamani
La Esperanza

Official Flag of Honduras



Where You Can Volunteer, Send Money or Donate to Help in Honduras

- 1.) Austin Helps Honduras; <http://www.austinhelphonduras.org/Donations.html>
- 2.) Episcopal Honduras Missions; <http://www.episcopalchurch.org>
- 3.) Walking with Children; <http://www.walkingwithchildren.org/sub/donation.html>
- 4.) Columbia Outreach; <http://www.columba.org/community/outreach/honduras.html>
- 5.) St Francis Episcopal; <http://community-2.webtv.net/John2981/HondurasMissions/>

- 6.) Operation Smile; <http://www.operationsmile.org/missions/reports/?country=HN>
- 7.) FUMC Honduras Fund; <http://www.fellowmaninternational.com/Donations.htm>
- 8.) FBC Honduras Children's Home; <http://www.fbc-cs.org/Honduras/Donations.htm>
- 9.) Mission Honduras Intl; <http://www.missionhonduras.com/page31/donatenow.html>
- 10.) SOS; [http://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/sponsor-a-child/americas-child-
sponsorship/honduras.htm](http://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/sponsor-a-child/americas-child-sponsorship/honduras.htm)
- 11.) Gehlen Mission to Honduras;
<http://www.gehlenmissionhonduras.org/>
- 12.) LeMars Mission Honduras;
<http://www.missionhonduraslemars.org/>
- 13.) Austin Diocese Honduras Mission;
<http://www.austindiocese.org/>
- 14.) El Hogar in Honduras;
<http://www.elhogar.org/sponsor.htm>
- 15.) Doctors Without Borders in Honduras;
<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/ng/ep11/ep11.html>