



## Mission UpReach Newsletter

# Education can change the world

By Phil Waldron

As of this writing a caravan of migrants headed to the United States is crawling along highways in Mexico. Their stated intent is to enter the US illegally hoping that public sympathy will compel the US government to “let them in.”

As an expatriate living in Honduras it is interesting to hear the very diverse opinions of this phenomenon played out in the media. There are people on all sides of this question that feel extremely passionate about what they believe is the “right” thing to do in response.

Many of the extreme perspectives, in my opinion, seem to be over simplistic in their logic. And the media and special interest groups really don’t help because they are leveraging the situation for their own political agendas. Here at Mission UpReach we are seeking permanent solutions to many of the factors that have motivated these immigrants to risk everything on their walk north. We believe that their response is not the solution. It is true that in Honduras more than 66% of the population live in poverty earning less than \$2.00 per day. Calculated over twelve months that is an annual income of \$730 per year. For the year 2017, in the United States, the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines for the 48 contiguous states, for a family of four, was \$24,600. This is more than 33 times what an average Honduran earns in a year.

In Honduras poverty is real. The crime and the systemic corruption that these immigrants in the caravan are fleeing is real. But let’s ask a question that might bring some clarity to the dilemma surrounding this current situation. If migration to the US is the solution to what oppresses the poor in Honduras; “what if all 66% of the population that lives in poverty left Honduras for the trek north?” That would be 66% of 8 million



people or 5,280,000 moving north in order to better their lives. That is just the poor population of Honduras. Add to that the poor in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico, all moving north to cross the border illegally and you would have the equivalent of a human Tsunami hitting the US economy. When you consider this simple perspective, it seems clear that migration in mass is not going to solve anything long term.

If you would like to have some first hand, quantitative knowledge of what the situation is on illegal immigration from Honduras to the US, I would encourage you to read an article that highlights a Honduran Jesuit organization’s survey results. The report (written in 2018 using 2017 results) confirmed the economic crisis in Honduras as the main cause for migration. Of the respondents that had a family member who had emigrated in the last four years, 82.9 percent did so due to lack of employment and opportunities to generate an income. Meanwhile, 11.3 percent migrated due to violence and insecurity. In comparison, the 2015 *ERIC-SJ* survey showed that 77.6 percent migrated for economic reasons and 16.9 percent migrated due to violence. (<https://>

[cis.org/Luna/Survey-Shows-Hondurans-Emigrate-Economic-Reasons](https://cis.org/Luna/Survey-Shows-Hondurans-Emigrate-Economic-Reasons))

Nelson Mandela spent much of the remaining years of his life fighting poverty on a massive scale after being released from 27 years of incarceration. Here is one of his quotes that speaks to a long-term solution to oppressive poverty. “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”— (Address by Mandela at launch of Mindset Network in July 2003). Mandela and others, like Gandhi, who have waged war on poverty have come to similar conclusions about poverty and oppression be it by crime or other elements in society. Gandhi said, “What is really needed to make democracy function is not knowledge of facts, but right education.”

Mission UpReach believes that the “right-education” that Gandhi spoke about it is one that affords the poor in Honduras the opportunity to become educated with formal schooling and spiritual discipling. We call it the John1010 Generation. Through the power of the Gospel we are seeking to disciple and educate a whole new generation of leaders that God can use to transform their nation one person at a time.



# Child Sponsorship: A long-term solution to poverty

By *Dakota Nowell*

It doesn't take long to see firsthand the effects that poverty has on over 60% of Hondurans. Just minutes outside the airport you see street vendors using make-shift stands and carts to sell food to the employees. An hour down the road you begin to see entire communities of houses made from mud, sticks, and scrap metal. Even in our beautiful town of Santa Rosa, the lack of high paying jobs keeps the majority of its citizens living in small dwellings shared by multiple family members. While poverty affects people of all ages, we believe that focusing on child poverty will provide us an opportunity to solve the problem at its root.

With an un-employment rate of over 20% and under-employment at 50%, it's no wonder that poverty has plagued Honduras for generations. "The poverty that

exists in Honduras limits the choices or options that you have to live an abundant life" says Dr. Scott Bedichek. As a Deacon over Benevolence and Missions with Southside Church of Christ and also a Board Member with Mission UpReach, Dr. Bedichek is well versed on the effects of poverty and has recently published a research paper on the impact of Medical Missions. In 2017, Dr. Bedichek and his family decided to support a little girl in Honduras named Iris who had a degenerative neurological disorder. The simple act of buying her some Ensure each month improved her quality of life drastically. This inspired us to do more. We've seen from examples like World Vision and Compassion



International that a Child Sponsorship program, when done right, is incredibly effective. That's why, after months of planning, we've decided to launch a new Child Sponsorship program, the DESEO Project.

The DESEO Project continues the bible-based morals and values education that we are already providing to over 2500 kids and goes above and beyond by also providing Medical Care, Education Assistance, and Spiritual Development. By matching one Sponsor to one child, we hope to create a genuine connection and show the love of Christ to countless children across Honduras. Check out our website, [deseoproject.org](http://deseoproject.org) to learn more or to sponsor a child today. If you believe your congregation would be willing to promote this program to members, contact us at [promotions@deseoproject.org](mailto:promotions@deseoproject.org). Through the DESEO Project, we're offering a long-term solution to poverty by ensuring the child receives the care, attention, and education needed to live an "Abundant Life".





# The Moses Project: Part of the fight against generational poverty

**By Caleb Gossett**

An article published in the European Journal of Educational Research highlights the concerning level of school dropouts in Central America. The authors state, “school dropout is a growing concern in Central America, and in Latin America as a whole, because of its consequences for economic productivity, the inclusiveness of growth, social cohesion, and increasing youth risks” (Adelman, Székely, 2017, pg. 235). Based on surveys done in Honduras (circa 2013), the authors report that of youth between the ages of 15 to 17 (of those surveyed), only 27% were enrolled in high school (Adelman, Székely, 2017). The authors of this article recognize the damage caused when students decide to drop out of school. Here at Mission UpReach we see first-hand the harm caused by lack of education and educational opportunities. Not just that, but the Honduran people face a daily, uphill battle against countless corrupt or damaged social institutions. A present plague of Honduras is generational poverty, which won’t easily relinquish its hold.

In response, Mission UpReach, with every activity and work, fights generational poverty in the name of Jesus. This goal and the mission are evident in the Moses Project, our 120-acre commercial farm and agriculture training center. Countless young men are gaining the much-needed

tools to pull themselves out of the generational poverty in which their families are trapped.

One such young man is Erlin Ramos, who grew up in a very poor family. Erlin’s father worked as a tenant farmer and their whole family lived in part of a warehouse that belong to the owner of the farm. When Erlin was seven, they finally moved into a house his father built, where they lived for multiple years



before the house even had electricity. Erlin’s path as a struggling farmer was fairly concrete. When he turned 16, his father stopped paying for his education because of the insecurity of his income and the resulting eventuality that Erlin would have to stop studying before he finished high school. So, rather than begin a path that could end unfinished, Erlin began working. A year later he heard about the Moses Project and recognized the opportunity it represented. After an interview process, Erlin was accepted into the program where he is now thriving. When asked why he went to

the project, Erlin says it was because he wanted to be someone. He wanted a chance to better himself, to be the first to graduate high school in his family, because he knew the path, he was on was not for him.

Through spiritual, educational and agriscience training, young men just like Erlin are being equipped to confront generational poverty. Erlin is now well on his way to completing his high school education and credits the

Moses Project not only with teaching him new aspects of agriculture, but also for inspiring in him a deeper relationship with God, and a healthier and happier relationship with his family. Erlin is currently thinking about what is next for him when he completes his time at the Moses Project. Right now, he is wrestling with whether or not he should study at a University level or return

to his community to help spread the good news of Jesus Christ. While Erlin may not know what decision to make, we know he is now equipped and ready to thrive, regardless of the path he chooses. The attitude Erlin now has is what Honduras needs; young men and women who are looking ahead and asking: what’s next? Honduras needs a new generation that is willing to dream and willing to take risks, knowing they are prepared; that is a generation that will inspire a renewed commitment to education, and a renewed energy for defeating generational poverty.



## A note from Donna



Since our arrival in Honduras in 2009, we recognized the importance of education in relation to changing

society. Our decision to focus a big portion of our resources to children was a good one and the results, as evidenced by changed lives, are astounding. As mentioned in this newsletter, we are launching a child sponsorship program that will enable us to expand our efforts in helping children stay in school because we believe it is one of the most important elements in overcoming poverty. We also know that a relationship with Jesus

will respond favorably and that any other obstacles will be removed. My favorite verse to pray lately has been, "Be exalted in your strength Lord; we will sing and praise your might!" (Ps. 21:13)

Christ is essential. Our DESEO program is the perfect opportunity to teach children about Jesus, help them establish a moral compass, while encouraging them to stay in school. Please consider joining us by sponsoring a child. You will help change a life and yours will probably change as well. Please be in prayer this month as we take our son, Harrison for an evaluation at the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab in Chicago, IL. The facility has been ranked number 1 in the US for over 24 years. While it is evident to us that Harrison's recovery is at the mercy of God and His decision to heal him, we also believe He expects us to knock, seek, and ask. We appreciate how so many of you tell us you are praying daily for Harrison and Hayley and we are encouraged by that. Your specific prayers that he might be accepted into their program are coveted. We would also appreciate you praying that his insurance

will respond favorably and that any other obstacles will be removed. My favorite verse to pray lately has been, "Be exalted in your strength Lord; we will sing and praise your might!" (Ps. 21:13)



**Give before December 31st. Giving sooner rather than later is better because every dollar given gets us closer to the goal which inspires even more people to give.**

## 2019 Brigade Season

January 5-12	..... VCOM	..... Medical
February 9-16	..... Surgical	..... General and ENT
February 16-19	..... Pine Tree	..... School sponsorship
February 23-March 2	..... Tusculum Church of Christ (TN)	..... Medical
March 9-16	..... Belton Church of Christ (TX)	..... Youth-VBS
March 16-23	..... Lipscomb University (TN)	..... Medical
March 23-30	..... VCOM	..... Medical
May 18-25	..... Oklahoma State (OK)	..... Construction
June 1-8	..... Snellville Church of Christ	..... VBS
June 8-15	..... Pine Tree Church of Christ	..... Medical/VBS/Construction
June 15-22	..... University Church of Christ	..... Medical
June 22-29	..... Burnt Hickory Church of Christ	..... Medical/VBS/Construction
July 6-13	..... Lexington Church of Christ	..... Medical
July 20-27	..... University CofC Youth	..... VBS
July 20-27	..... Disciple Trips	..... VBS
July 27-August 3	..... Southside CofC (TX)	..... Medical
Sept. 28-Oct. 5	..... Surgical	..... Orthopedic

## Mission UpReach Board Members

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 Donna Waldron, Santa Rosa de Copán  
 Phil Waldron, Santa Rosa de Copán

**Other Giving** Mission UpReach is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. We can assist you to designate MUR in a corporations' matching gifts program, or giving through a United Way campaign, or as you prepare wills for your estate.

## Please contact us:

Our mailing address is as follows:

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Please send all checks, donations and correspondence to this address.

You can correspond directly with Phil and Donna at:

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