

Mission UpReach Newsletter

Year-End Fundraising Campaign and Hurricane Relief

By Phil Waldron, CEO and Co-Founder MUR

Wow...2020 couldn't be worse, right? At least that's what we all thought. In Honduras the COVID19 Pandemic has had a devastating effect on the health of the overall population and an equally devastating effect on the economy. This is an economy that even in the best of times is considered to be a "third-world economy." While sophisticated elites bristle at the use of the term "third world," it is still the most commonly understood descriptor of nations like Honduras. The Borgen Project defines the term this way: "As a society, the term 'third world country' refers to countries with high mortality rates, especially infant mortality rates. They also have an unstable and inconsistent economy." This is a very apt description of Honduras during normal times.



Photo Credit: Once Noticias

On top of the devastation we've seen from the COVID19 pandemic, the month of November saw the destruction of two successive hurricanes. These came almost back-to-back and were then followed by a tropical depression that continued to dump even more water on the country. The first hurricane was ETA and was rated as a CAT 4 storm. It was followed by Hurricane IOTA which was rated as a CAT 5. The economic damage brought on by these two storms is unprecedented, even topping the damage by the previous record-breaking storm of Hurricane Mitch back in October of 1998.

The damage to infrastructure and to the economy is estimated to be up to 3.5% of the GDP. If the US were to suffer this kind of damage, it would be in the order of \$719 billion dollars. The true impact on the Honduran economy is much less than that of the US (more like \$839 million dollars); however, percentage-wise it is the same. Honestly, the US would be able to weather that kind of loss much easier than Honduras is going to be able to handle their loss.

I have said all of the above to update you on two significant needs. At present, we are down to the last month of our Annual Year-End Fundraising Campaign that usually raises more than 50% of our entire operation budget for the year. In addition, in November, due to needs that have arisen to help some of the 3.5 million people affected by the hurricanes, MUR has set up a way for people to donate money so that our Moses Project can deliver free, whole (processed) chickens to those in need. This allows us to continue to pay our 125 employees, who are head of households, as well as help those who are in need of food.

We still need funds to reach our goal for our annual fundraising campaign, but we also need donations to help those who have lost everything. Please consider giving to one or both of these needs before December 31st. You will not find a better cause to help than one of these. The quickest way to give is to go to our website at: missionupreach.org



Photo Credit: WhatsApp



DESEO plans for 2021

By Donna Waldron

Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.” That certainly describes what 2020 has looked like for many of us and especially our DESEO program. We had exciting plans with some new ideas to implement for 2020 and started the year out with a bang when suddenly Covid-19 happened. Like most, we surmised that the shut-down would be temporary. We sent our DESEO team members out to our Moses Project to work in positions that were opening up instead of laying them off. This temporary arrangement became permanent as time went on, and suddenly we are at the end of the year. I recently met with our DESEO team members and offered each of them the opportunity to stay in their new positions for 2021. They each expressed sincere gratitude for the opportunity to continue working during the pandemic, and they also each expressed a strong desire to be back on the DESEO team for 2021.

Now that the changes of 2020 seem to be never ending, we are forced to reinvent ourselves as a ministry. We also have had to ask honest questions about our worth as a program and if our foundational purposes are worthy of forging a new approach in order to maintain our goals and purposes. As a team, we all agree that the program is worthy of saving and that we must reinvent ourselves in our new reality.

Like many U.S. schools, Honduran schools have moved to a remote learning approach. Sadly, 1.4 million children in Honduras do not have access to remote learning and have been forced to drop out of school. What we know from our work among this population is that the majority of those children will never return to school. Many come from families that need “all hands on deck” to labor for the daily food the family needs to survive. It is a sacrifice for many families in Honduras to have an able-bodied child in school all day when they could be working. With the pandemic, and now the devastation of back-to-back hurricanes, the prospects of those children going back to school are very slim.

The other 1.4 million children in Honduras who have managed to stay connected to remote learning will be in need of serious remediation. Remote learning in Honduras is nothing like remote learning in the U.S. The government makes no provisions for children’s connectivity nor does it provide any type of devices. The best teachers can do, in many cases, is send homework assignments and ask the children to send back photos of the completed tasks. Teaching and instruction are not available, except in the cases of the children from upper class families who attend private schools. With the widespread destruction of the hurricanes, the 1.4 million number is expected to increase significantly as thousands of families have been displaced and lost everything.

In light of these challenges, our team spent several hours brainstorming ideas of how we can make a difference in our region. The verdict is still out on whether the 2021 school year will begin remotely or in person. The Honduran school year is February to November, so there is still time to decide. Regardless of the situation, we have opportunities in abundance to make a difference. The first, and perhaps most important, is that we will start to visit the children who have dropped out of school to assess their needs and encourage them to continue their formal education. We will double down on our tutoring program this year, helping with remediation as much as we can. This may be done house to house or in small groups in an outdoor setting. We have also discussed forming small groups of students who have dropped out due to lack of resources and giving them access to remote learning as well as much needed tutoring to help them stay engaged in school. We obviously can’t help the 1.4 million children who have dropped out of school, but we can help several hundred children in our region. This effort to get children back in school and back on track will extend way beyond 2021. Our team of 6 will have their hands full, and if funding were available, we would increase our team and our outreach. We appreciate your prayers and support as we figure out how to make our new reality something good and positive in which God is glorified.

Please donate today!

A donation of just \$4.25 provides a whole chicken to feed one of our families hit hard by the effects of Hurrican Eta. How many families would you like to help?

Mail a check, marked Eta Relief, to:
Mission UpReach, Inc.
3221 Dundee Road
Longview, TX 75604

OR, go to our website at
www.missionupreach.org
and click on “Eta Relief”



Hurricane relief efforts

By Elsie Harbison

November has brought levels of devastation to Honduras that we have never seen before. We were astounded by the destruction wrought by Hurricane Eta, and then just 2 weeks later Hurricane Iota came through even WORSE than Eta. Recently Honduran Foreign Minister said that hurricanes Eta and Iota have left 276,000 people evacuated, 123,000 rescued from the waters, 130,000 in shelters, 35,000 homes destroyed or damaged and 47 bridges destroyed with a further 57 bridges damaged. The absolute accuracy of these numbers is unsure, but they give an idea of how big the



Photo Credit: WhatsApp

affect has been on Honduras.

Bridges are washed away, roads are closed due to flooding and landslides, the airport is under water, people had been waiting on their roofs to be rescued for days... The photos are jarring. Social media is still filled with bulletins of people searching for the whereabouts of family members, of requests for help in digging out houses under 5 feet of mud, and of news stories that you think can't get any worse. People are crowded under gas station roofs, under bridges, and if they're lucky, in shelters for protection. And COVID? How are people supposed to protect themselves from that when many only just barely



escaped with their lives?

Many individuals and organizations are trying to help the thousands upon thousands of people without basic food security, access to potable water, and sanitation and hygiene services, but it sometimes feels like just a drop in the bucket.

Although our town sustained significantly fewer damages from these disasters than other areas of the country, it is clear that everyone has a family member or friend who has lost everything in the floods. Not one Honduran has been untouched by this.

Mission UpReach, the Church of Christ in Corquin, and Inversiones Manos de Jesus are working together to help communities devastated by the

wash and cook in order to satisfy their hunger. In the area of San Manuel de Colohete, where a landslide killed at least 8 people, about 200 people have lost everything, and we have been trying to get aid to these communities.

Some communities are completely cut off due to destroyed bridges and roads and unable to receive food. In order to get supplies to them, we took a vehicle as far as we could, switched to a motorcycle to get it to the urban center, and the people of the communities arrived on horses and on foot to receive the food they so badly needed. We were able to get them donations of beans, corn, rice, chicken, radishes, green peppers and clothes.

In the northern part of the country, specifically San Pedro Sula which sustained some of the greatest flooding and loss, we are supporting some families of our church members. Due to the limited access of the area caused by the hurricane damage, we cannot visit them personally, but we have sent monetary support.

A renewed hope is starting to appear as resilient Hondurans support each other and international communities step up to aid in restoration. If you feel called to join us in helping Honduras during these unprecedented times, go to missionupreach.org to donate. And, please, continue to pray.



Photo Credit: San Manuel de Colohete

hurricanes. Such communities as Cipresal and Caudate in Ocotepeque have lost all their crops, and according to local accounts, they sometimes have to collect muddy ears of corn to



A note from Donna



As I look around at how many are suffering in this world, I feel great despair and sadness. It is our human tendency to distract ourselves and try to escape the pain around us. I suppose we have to take a break if we can, or we will fall into

depression. Nevertheless, there are days you cannot escape it. Today, my heart is breaking for the thousands of people in Honduras who have lost everything. In some cases, family members have suffocated in the mudslides. Others lost homes and their food sources. The struggling economy of Honduras has now received a blow that seems impossible to overcome.

And yet, Phil and I have the blessed opportunity to be in the middle of the devastation. The new opportunities to serve and help are numerous. We honestly don't even

know where to begin. Our simple effort to provide frozen chickens seems feeble, but to a starving family it will be incredible. Having been stuck here in the U.S., I told Phil that I know now how easy it is to feel distant from the suffering and struggles in Honduras. The devastation of the hurricanes and subsequent human suffering doesn't even make the news here in the U.S. And yes, I know there's a lot of suffering going on here as well. Lately, as I enjoy a hot meal, I feel almost nauseated to think of the thousands who would literally die to have what I have. It's a really difficult and tough place to be, but I think God wants us to sit in that uncomfortable place and contemplate what we might do for those less fortunate.

As we enter a season of festivities and food and gifts, I pray that we will all experience a bit of uneasiness in our abundance, so much so that we respond by giving to others. God calls us to give sacrificially. Any gift that is easy to give is not a sacrifice. Forgive me if I am boldly stepping on your toes, but please hear these words from God: "But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving" (2 Cor. 8:7).

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Please contact us:

Our mailing address is as follows:

Mission UpReach, Inc.
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Longview, TX 75604

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

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