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Transforming the Lives of Young People A Story of Transformation



by **Eduardo Artica**
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The Association for a More Just Society (AJS) has a vision for children and adolescents in Honduras. AJS's vision through Youth Impact Club programs has been to train children and adolescents so they can develop the values of love and service for their neighbors and community. We are proud and thankful to God for the lives of six young men living in one of the most dangerous areas of Flor Del Campo, a neighborhood in the capital city. These six young men have completed their cycle at the Youth Impact Club and now they have become volunteers for this program. They were part of the club led by Pastor Mario Cantor, who acknowledges that "dealing with the energy, creativity and rebelliousness of these six young men was no easy task."

Some of their first tasks as volunteers was to join the club's mentor during household visits for the new children involved in clubs. They also helped the organization's mentor with activities and games during the club meetings every Saturday.

But this was not enough for them. Two of the volunteers, Edwin and Yefri, expressed to the mentor, Dinora, their interest in helping with other responsibilities in addition to helping her during the club meetings. One of the most important tasks during the club meeting is the time for learning and reflection on a moral value. AJS calls this the impact lesson. Dinora asked Edwin and Yefri



to help facilitate the impact lessons, and the challenge was accepted by these two young men.

Now Dinora meets with Edwin and Yefri each week to prepare the lesson for that week's meeting. This experience has increased the desire of the other volunteers to become clubs mentors. Edwin and Yefri have put in so much effort and dedication that AJS is thinking about officially training them as mentors, and making them fully responsible for a club in the future.

The mothers of these young men are very happy to see how their children have been developing leadership skills. Nubia, Edwin's mother, shared with us how happy she is to see her son's enthusiasm and dedication towards the development of Impact Club. She is very proud to see her son as a positive example for the community.

In the Impact Club called Youth in Action, the children were surprised to realize how Edwin and Yefri were a part of the club under the same conditions and social risks as them. Now they are well-behaved young men, with an attitude of hope for life and an example for them.

Updating Community Plans



by **Rolando Pinzon**
Constituency Bridger
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August has come and gone. But with it came preseason football and consequently that means the start of the NFL football season; definitely one of my favorite times of the year. August isn't one of my favorite months just because of football, it's also a month when my co-workers and I get to work on helping communities update their community plans. This means visiting many beautiful communities, meeting with community leaders, and getting to work!

Let's start with the community of Laure in the Department (state or province) of Valle, in the southern part of Honduras. Every year we meet with the leaders, open with prayer, and explain why we are there. We are there to help them facilitate an evaluation of the community and update its community plan based on the seven dimensions of transformation (shared vision, sense of community, ownership, leadership, assets, knowledge and skills, ongoing learning, and spiritual transformation).

In summary, transformation has to be about "heart change" and has to be comprehensive. Transformation has to belong to the community be embedded in local organizations, and sustainable. Usually this involves integrated approaches, which are not the same as transformation. Integrated approaches do not necessarily indicate that transformational development is happening.

During this process, communities evaluate themselves on a scale of 1-5 (1 being poor and 5 being excellent) for each dimension. This allows the people in the community to see the health of their community. Then they look at the previous year's plan, see what was accomplished or not, and analyze why or why not certain actions did or didn't take place.



It's important to note that World Renew and its local partners work with communities that have a community plan. A community plan shows that they want to transform, that they are organized and willing to work for that transformation! This also implies, in some cases, that they are ready to partner with a Church or group from North America. Those churches and groups like to review the plans and support the community they are partnering with in achieving its dream, whether it be prayer or supporting

with special projects. Whenever possible, our churches and groups want to walk alongside the members of a community.

We also visited the community of Playa Negra and Corinto in the south and the community of Briones in Olanchito, way up in the north of Honduras. I always take this time as a gift from God because it allows us to see many wonderful things that are happening in the community.

When we visit we get to see what members of the communities are up to. We are able to see how the community is preparing for churches and groups that are about to visit. When we visit communities we get to meet wonderful people and catch up with old friends. Visiting the communities allows us to see how much they love and miss us. Most importantly, visiting the communities allows me to see how grateful they are to Go and how we love the Lord together!



Introducing Matt DeKam, new Program Consultant

Matt and Katie De Kam and their children James (4 years) and Marta (2 years) will be stationed in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. Matt has a background in agricultural engineering, and Katie is an ESL teacher. They served as volunteers in Honduras with World Renew from 2008 until 2010 and had a wonderful experience. Now they have the opportunity to return and work with the people they know and love. Matt will be on staff with World Renew as a Program Consultant, helping partner organizations in Honduras manage their programs and achieve their goals.



Project Management Training



by **Matt DeKam**
Program Consultant
Honduras Team

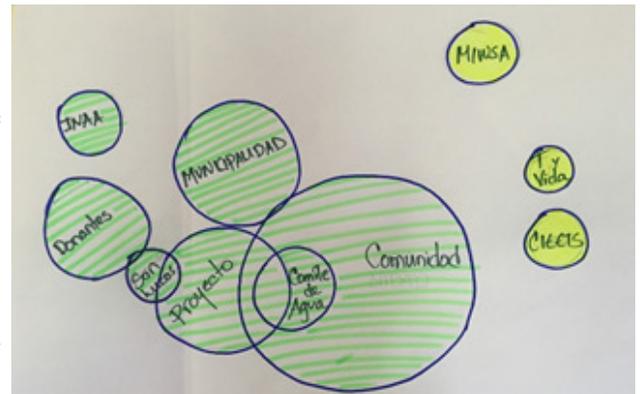
One of the first things that I did when I started working for World Renew was attend a week long project management training called PMD Pro (Project Management for Development Professionals). It was a very intense training, held in Valle de Angeles, Honduras. Staff from many partner organizations around Central America attended from countries such as Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala. (See <http://www.apmginternational.com/pmd-pro.aspx> for more on that.)



It was a good exercise to get me thinking, reading, and writing in Spanish again. The manual was 173 pages and the course culminated in an exam with

75 questions that you needed to pass in order to be certified. My engineering friends will be glad to know that the training included work breakdown structures (WBS), network diagrams, the critical path method, Gantt charts, and of course, earned value (etc).

Many of us stayed up late into the night, and got up early to study



for the exam. This shared challenge made for a good environment to get to know colleagues. It felt like we were in University again.

I am happy to see that this level of professionalism and rigor is being applied to development projects and programs that World Renew is involved in. The training provided a good framework for carrying out my job as a program consultant and also provided some special tools that apply specifically to the complexities of community development. I'm also happy that I passed the exam.

