

Well I'm back from my year in Honduras and what follows is a short report of my time there. I have had an amazing experience and am grateful to everyone who donated to my target and enabled me to go.

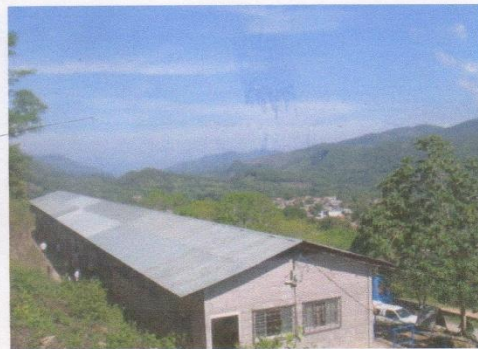
Honduras is the second largest and second poorest country in Central America, located south of Guatemala and North of Nicaragua it is the very centre point of all of the Americas.

My time in Honduras was spent teaching in Taulabe a small town with a population of around 6000 situated in the middle of a vast cloud forest. The town itself is somewhat large with a few concrete roads (the largest on the main street) however there are mainly damaged dirt roads. There is an economical divide in the small town between the upper and lower class people: the upper classes live in large houses with tall brick walls and electrified fences and the lower class live in small concrete or wooden houses. There is a problem with health in Taulabe. The people eat a very unhealthy diet due to high quantities of sugar and fried food. Coca Cola sadly has a major presence. Access to fresh fruit and vegetables is limited for the poorer people. Medical care is expensive and beyond the reach of many. Un-treated broken bones and bacterial infections from the water are common. Electricity frequently cuts out and there is little internet access. The problems Taulabe faces are somewhat irrelevant within the community and rest as an underlying problem as a genuinely happy approach to life appears in most of its residents.

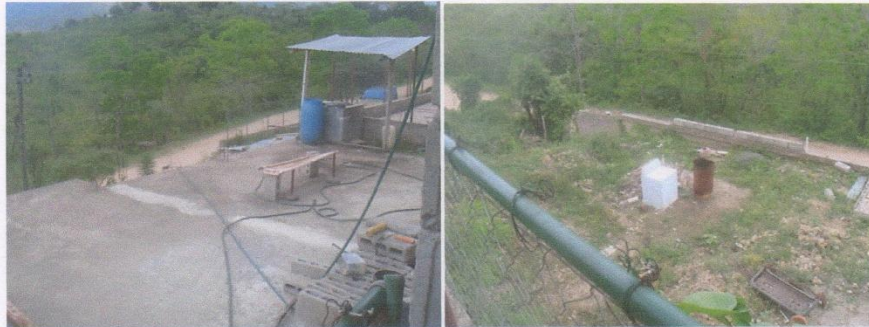


Main road Taulabe

My work took place at La Orquidea a small privately owned non-profit making bilingual school. Located up a dirt track surrounded by forest it sits cut into a mountain overlooking the town of Taulabe. The school itself is owned by a Ms Khalila Garcia an American woman who runs it from the states and does not make a profit from the school in any way.



The school is basic and ill equipped. Some of the conditions in the school are quite dangerous something that perhaps wouldn't pass health and safety in Britain.



For instance the end of the play ground is an unprotected sheer 20ft drop to the lower grounds which resemble a building site

The school consists of nine classrooms, a library, a computer suite and a small concrete area for the children to play. The classrooms only have basic resources e.g. desk chairs and whiteboards.



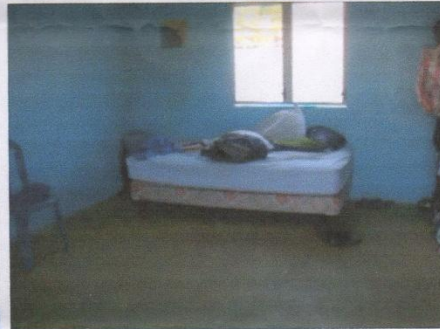
The day is from 07:00 – 14:00, and is sectioned into nine periods with two breaks. The timetable changed over the course of the week. I taught first grade maths, science. P.E and virtues; second grade- science, virtues and English, and third grade p.e and virtues. All of these classes were taught in English a task I found challenging at the beginning as there was a massive language barrier. I had little or no Spanish. There was no set curriculum so for the whole year I had to plan what to teach to the children. This was also intensely challenging but gradually we made progress together. The year is broken up into four partials with an exam being taken at the end of each one. At the end of the year the children's scores are put together and an average taken.



I found working with the children rewarding. They were extremely eager to learn. They would all try really hard and take pride in their work. Although very young they understood education was important and genuinely seemed to appreciate the efforts of the volunteers. Although most of them came from backgrounds of extreme poverty they arrived at school in immaculately clean uniforms. The school gave them a purpose and identity.

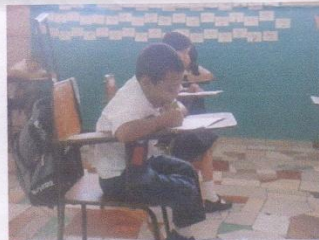
At times the work was frustrating. Resources were poor and some of the children had learning difficulties. No one previously had time to work separately with them. One of my proudest achievements was when a little boy in my class who had been unable to grasp basic arithmetic scored a high pass in his test.

I have had a wonderful experience in Honduras. I know I made a difference to the children and they certainly had a profound effect on me. I didn't appreciate the very real hardships some people face in the world. Not just the lack of physical possessions but the lack of opportunities for education and healthcare. The following pictures show the house I stayed in with another volunteer. It is very basic but is a lot better than the homes of some of the children.



Education is so important in a country like Honduras. Hopefully the children will now be able to progress to the next stage in the education system which is college. This will give them the opportunity to get employment other than working the land or selling wares in the street for under minimum wage. Without schools like La Orquidea they would never reach that level.

I am so grateful to everyone for the generous donations made towards the total I had to raise to fund my year. I really do appreciate the trust and confidence you placed in me. Without such donations I wouldn't have been able to go. I hope I have been able to convey to you how worthwhile I believe the work I was doing was.





If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

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