

December 2022

Newsletter

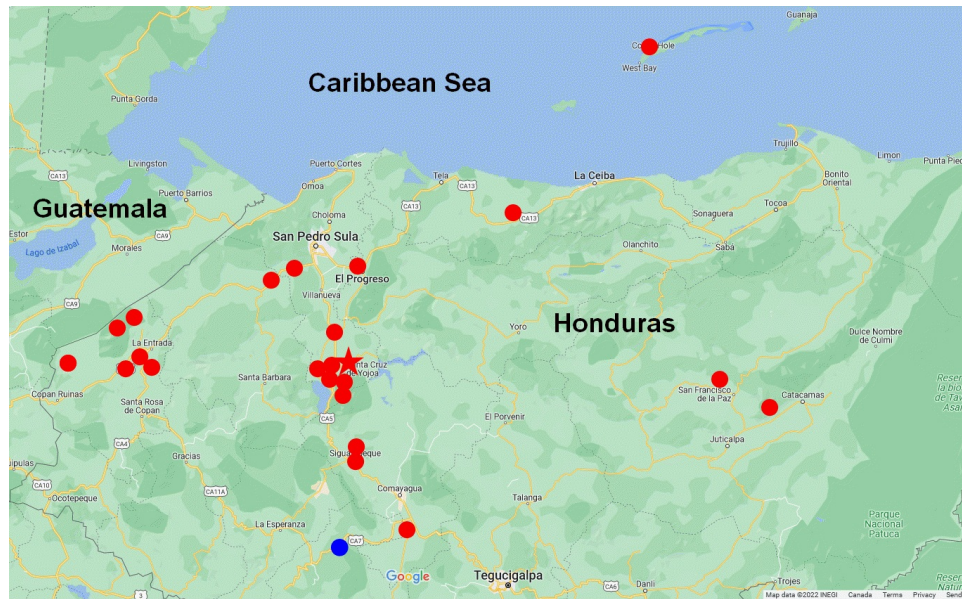
Honduras

Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL)

Honduran schools were closed in March, 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. However, CPI's schools were able to continue serving their students remotely because their program is computer-based. In February, 2022, the Honduran government relaxed restrictions and schools were allowed to reopen. Across the country, enrolments were down as some students stayed home to help support their families, while others opted to join migrations to the United States in search of a better life. Nevertheless, in June, 705 students were registered in CPI's main school in Santa Cruz de Yojoa and 25 satellites throughout the country. One of these satellites opened in 2022 in the village of Guacostoro with an enrolment of four girls and three boys.



Students returning to CPI's school in Santa Cruz de Yojoa



Locations of CPI's schools in Honduras. The main campus in Santa Cruz de Yojoa is indicated by the asterisk and the new school in Guacastoro by the blue circle.

Container Shipment for Honduras

After nearly two years of collecting used computers, tools, bicycles, and sewing machines from a variety of sources, CPI is getting ready to send a 40-ft container to Honduras. The preparations including servicing and inspecting 94 sewing machines and nearly 100 bikes. About 440 computers have been checked for functionality and loaded with Windows 10 after having had their hard drives cleaned. The final task will be to complete the detailed paperwork required by the Honduran government for importing these goods.



The computers will replace inoperable machines and help to meet the needs of an increasing enrolment. The tools and sewing machines will be employed in vocational training programs that are being established for moto-taxi repair and sewing. The bicycles will enable students who cannot afford other means of transportation to attend CPI schools in remote locations.

Because of the time required to finish packing the container and possible delays in shipping, 60 refurbished Chromebooks have been purchased and will be sent to Honduras as soon as possible to meet the urgent demand for computers.

CPI Directors Visit Honduras

In October, four members of CPI's Board of Directors, Gordon and Wendy Baergen, Michelle Lacoursiere, and Dorothea Schlichting, embarked on a two-week trip to Honduras. Their aims were to evaluate ongoing projects, investigate opportunities for future projects, and meet with the Board and staff of CPI's Honduran affiliate, Asociación Confraternidad Honduras (ACH). They visited several remote communities that have expressed a desire for CPI to establish CAL schools. Discussions were held with ACH personnel to plan for vocational training such as sewing and welding. A meeting was also held with the mayor of Santa Cruz de Yojoa to procure his assistance in importing the container and expanding CPI's school in his town.

Centre Necesidad Educationel (CNEE)

One day, the group visited a special lady named Esperanza in a remote area near the town of Peña Blanca just north of Lake Yojoa. Two years ago, she put out a call for financial aid to help her realize her dream of constructing a facility for children with special needs. A generous response



from participants in CPI's learning tours and other Canadians allowed her to witness the recent completion of the desired building. CNEE staff specialize in working with preschoolers suffering from autism, Down syndrome, language delays, and dyslexia. The young students attend classes three mornings a week. On these days, food donations enable the children to eat together and the distribution of bags of rice and beans to their families.

Beginning in January, 2023, the building will also house one of CPI's new CAL schools. Twelve computers are available for students who enroll in the CAL program.

Impressions of a CPI Board Member (Dorothea Schlichting)

Many Hondurans live in remote rural areas where poverty is the norm. The choices families must make are hierarchical: buying food comes before paying for books, uniforms, and transportation to school. Consequently, youth are needed to work to help provide for the family. CPI's CAL program provides the opportunity to overcome this obstacle because books and uniforms are not required and school attendance is flexible.

We were responding to invitations to introduce CAL in a number of rural areas, where parents and community leaders want their young people to have the opportunity to complete at least Grade 9. One day, it took us two hours to drive 24 km up a mountain road before we arrived at the village

of Guajiquiro at an elevation of 2225 m. In the village, a mural painted boldly on two blocks of buildings includes a tribute to Berta Cáceres, an internationally known, local environmental activist and indigenous leader who was assassinated in 2016.



The woman who had invited us to meet with the local people in a simple church structure had earned their trust and respect from the years she had served them as a community worker. As we described the CAL program to them, the voices and faces in the meeting demonstrated interest, hope, and determination. “What else do we need?” they asked. In response, we committed CPI to provide computers and facilitator training. The faith group, led by a female pastor, offered their building for the students. The district education director, who works with the village’s public school, endorsed the need for CAL here and already had a list of youth ready to sign up. We were also informed that the new mayor, a young woman, would give her support.

In a second remote village later that day, we heard the passion of a single mother as she expressed her gratitude that her teenage daughter is getting a chance she never had. Her son will soon be in the program as well. In another community, a single mother who had sacrificed much to educate her children is offering her home for neighbourhood teens to study using CAL. Too often, the fate of uneducated rural female teens is very young motherhood. The opportunity to complete Grade 9 provides a focus and hope to develop their potential and opens doors to options they would otherwise not have.

2023 Learning Tour to Honduras

With the easing of travel restrictions, Gordon and Wendy Baergen will lead CPI’s first Learning Tour to Honduras since 2019. Departure for San Pedro Sula, Honduras is planned for March 7, 2023. The

tour will include about 10 days on the mainland and an optional four-day stay at a resort on Roatan Island. The estimated cost for the mainland portion only is CA\$2,300 per person, which includes all travel, accommodations, meals, and a \$500 charitable donation to CPI. For more information, contact Gordon Baergen at 780-953-2651 or gdbaergen@gmail.com.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The CAL program in Sub-Saharan Africa will be overseen by CPI's affiliate, CPI Africa, which was incorporated in Kenya in 2022. A native Kenyan, Patrick Obonde, will return from Canada to lead an ambitious program with the aim of placing schools throughout the region within 10 years. Whenever the program expands into another country, a new Director from that nation will join the Board of CPI Africa.

CAL schools have begun operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya, with another being planned for Rwanda. Leaders in Burkina Faso, Tanzania, and Malawi are also keenly interested in establishing schools in their countries.



Patrick Obonde

Kenya

CPI has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Africa Peace Ministry Institute to deliver an educational program in Kenya including academic courses through CAL and vocational training. The first school opened in the Nairobi suburb of Ngong in May, 2022 with 48 students enrolled to learning vocational skills; in particular, hairdressing and how to use computers.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

CPI opened its first CAL school in DRC in 2021 at the Bomoyi ya Sika orphanage in Kinshasa, a facility operated by the Congolese Mennonite Brethren Church (CEFMC). The Congolese CAL platform, which is being developed by Theo and Gloria Fumana of Edmonton, Herve Kimbau of DRC, and Edel Andino of Honduras, incorporates the national curriculum used by CEFMC in their schools. As of April, 2022, 38 students were enrolled in the school.

Another school was to open in the city of Kikwit, about 500 km east of Kinshasa in 2022. However, the building intended for the school was found to be in need of repairs and renovations that would have been prohibitively expensive. A better option became available at a CEFMC facility which

already houses a church and Bible school. The school is scheduled to open in January, 2023 after several rooms are modified.



Building that will house CPI's CAL school in Kikwit, DRC

Rwanda

CPI has signed a MOU with Grace Children's Ministries (GCM) to operate a CAL school in Rwanda. Founded in 2005 in Rwanda as a response to the effects of the genocide against the Tutsi people in 1994, GCM supports orphans, vulnerable children, and single mothers in Bugesera District in Eastern Province, south of the capital Kigali. GCM has purchased a plot of land, and now is raising funds to construct a building.

2022 CPI Annual General Meeting

The 2022 AGM was held online on June 5. Directors elected to the Board included five incumbents, whose two-year terms were expiring, and two new members: Dorothea Schlichting, a retired nurse, and Lindsay Heckman, manager of the Edmonton MCC Thrift Shop. The Board thanks retiring Directors Shyla Varghese and John Woollard, who had been on the Board since 2011 and 2016, respectively, for their service. As Treasurer since 2011, Shyla was invaluable in providing financial oversight for CPI. Her bookkeeping duties have been assumed by Paul Precht.

The Annual Report for 2021 can be downloaded from the CPI web site at:
<https://www.canadianpeacemakers.org/annual-reports>

CPI 25-year Anniversary Celebration

On February 1997, a group of Edmontonians led by Dave Hubert met in the home of Hans and Frieda Claassen to decide what they could do to help alleviate poverty in Central America. Thus was born Christian Peacemakers International, later to be renamed Canadian Peacemakers International. The first project of the fledgling organization was to assist in the reconstruction of a village (Buenos Aires) in Honduras that had been devastated by Hurricane Mitch in 1998. Subsequently, in order to help landless families become landowners, CPI built a new farming village in Tapiquillares and teamed with Habitat for Humanity to construct another in Plan Grande. At the urging of local leaders, CPI moved into the field of junior high school education and introduced a novel program offering Grades 7 to 9 using Computer-Assisted Learning. A school was opened in a rented house in the town of Santa Cruz in 2009, followed two years later by the first satellite school in the mountain village of Las Delicias. Since then, the program has blossomed to include 26 schools in 2022, with the result that more than 5,000 students have completed one year of education. This success in Honduras spurred CPI's expansion into Sub-Saharan Africa in 2021.



To mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of CPI, a celebration was held on September 10 at the farm of Board Vice-Chair Phil Gaudet. About 50 people, including past and present Board members and participants in past Learning Tours to Honduras enjoyed a meal prepared by chef Doreen Prei and music by an *ad hoc* group of CPI musicians. Joining by video link to extend best wishes were Yeni López Tovar and Isaias López from Honduras and Luis López from Missouri. Yeni is ACH's Director of Computer-Assisted Learning and Isaias is Vice-Chair of the ACH Board of Directors; both have become driving forces behind CPI's education program in Honduras. Luis was an invaluable asset for CPI in Honduras as a "fixer", in general, and a translator and guide on Learning Tours, in particular, before emigrating to the United States in 2022.

Program Goals for 2023

In 2023, the major goals of CPI and its partners, Asociación Confraternidad Honduras and CPI Africa, are to:

1. Establish three new satellite schools in Honduras.
2. Offer a program that will give working adults in rural Honduran communities the opportunity to take Grades 7-9 at home using their own computers.
3. Develop a plan for vocational training in Honduras that will align the interests and talents of students with employment opportunities in their communities.
4. Open a new school in the D.R. Congo and one in Kenya.
5. Implement a computer collection system in Winnipeg's Mennonite community.
6. Obtain government credentialing for all programming offered in Kenya.
7. Complete development of the CAL platform in Kenya for English-speaking Africa, including building the peace library.
8. Send a sea can filled with equipment to Honduras.

Donations

The financial support of individual donors is essential for ensuring the success of CPI's programs in Honduras and Sub-Saharan Africa. Tax receipts will be issued for gifts over \$20 (CRA Charitable # 868063090RR0001. Donations can be made by:

1. Sending a cheque payable to: Canadian Peacemakers International
P.O. Box 42123 Millbourne
Edmonton, AB
Canada T6K 4C4
2. Making automatic monthly withdrawals from your bank account (send a void check to the above address).
3. Making an E-transfer to cpi.office.donations@gmail.com (include your name and address to receive a charitable receipt).
4. Donating at: <https://atbcares.benevity.org/community/cause/124-868063090RR0001> (possible matching gift).
5. Donating at: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/association-of-canadian-peacemakers-international-canada/> (monthly giving can also be arranged here).

Note: The Board, Executive Director, and Regional Directors serve in volunteer capacities and receive no remuneration.