

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

2020 has been a strange year for all of us. It has been the worst year for Honduras since I started sending supplies to the country 47 years ago. They started 2020 with a ruined harvest due to lack of rain. Then came Covid 19 with a severe lock down from March lasting seven months. This has resulted in a large amount of unemployment in a country where employment was in short supply before the pandemic. They had just started to come out of lock down, due to necessity, when two large hurricanes, only two weeks apart, hit the nation. We have ended 2020 with much of CH Trust's monetary resources being used to bring relief to thousands of families and children.

THE WATER TANK PROJECT

Cesar, along with his sister and niece, made their usual trip to the Lenca people to take them 1000 food bags and 200 fruit trees. These were badly needed as the harvest had failed due to lack of rain in this drought prone corridor. The Lencas live in an agricultural area where the main cash crop is coffee. Maize and red



- WATER TANK UNDER CONSTRUCTION -

beans are also grown for local consumption. Lack of rain and water has meant that crops have been lost and with that, the ability to feed the 1500 to 2000 families living in the area.

We have been looking to find a way forward for these people who have to live off the land. Food security has always been very fragile. Their biggest problem has been insufficient rain for the crops. To improve the situation, we looked into bringing water from a nearby reservoir into an area which would service five villages. The local people were willing to do all that they could to make this project happen but they were very, very poor.

In the beginning this project had a rather slow start, partly due to Cesar living several hours drive from its location and also the need to get official permission from the government in Tegucigalpa to take water from the reservoir. Fifty years ago, a block water tank had been built to serve the villages. However, this had deteriorated over the years and leaked too badly to be usable. The tank was inspected by a civil engineer who deemed it beyond repair and recommended that it would be more cost effective to build a new tank rather than try to patch up the old one. The good news was that the existing pipe line between the tank and reservoir was good and usable.

CH Trust agreed to take on the project of building a new tank. Construction was immediately delayed by bureaucracy. The delay arose in trying to get the bank to cooperate in transferring the money needed for the various construction stages. Nothing is simple in Honduras! Having overcome this problem, just as we were ready to start buying supplies and begin building, the country was paralysed by Hurricane Eta, a category 4 hurricane, followed by category 5 Hurricane Iota. Both brought wind, rain and flooding.

When visiting the Lencas to make a food delivery in December 2019, Cesar met with the group of men who make up the water tank committee. They were very distressed because, with the part of the money already provided, they had failed to get to site all the building materials needed for the first phase of the build and failed to start the work. This was due to the heavy rains and flooding caused by the hurricanes. As a result of their failure, they were very concerned that their dream of a new water supply was about to evaporate, in circumstances where outside help for them does not usually exist. Cesar assured them that we understood and it was not a problem.

Since that time, they have worked with great enthusiasm and have finished the project in record time. The new tank will provide drinking water for some 1500 to 2000 families; an estimated 7,500 to 10,000 people or more. Now that the project is complete more people are looking to move into the area to take advantage of the new water supply.

Over 100 of their people helped with the construction, both men, women and children, all doing whatever they could to help with the project. The project leader for the communities, asked Cesar to tell the people of England that, in spite of the delays and setbacks, their commitment to this wonderful project has always been 100%, because this water supply is so greatly needed by the five different communities of Lajas, Yarula, Cipre, Tierra and Colorada.

The photo shows the builders starting to construct the complex steel reinforced base of the tank. The old tank can be seen in the background.



- TANK CONSTRUCTION BEGINS -

When Cesar went to inspect the completed tank, he had CH Trust painted on its surface. He also took a food bag for each person, who had helped to build the tank, as our thank you for a job well executed. He also took vegetable seeds for the communities. These were planted immediately and have already produced plants.

At long last the Lenca people have been able to sow and harvest a crop. Radishes give the first edible and saleable crop. Three or more years of severe drought have been very bad for the Lenca people who live exclusively off the land.

The tank holds 20,000 litres of water and re-fills, from empty, in 15 hours directly from the nearby reservoir. With a continual supply it should mean that the communities can access a full tank of water daily. What a blessing! Cesar is envious, as he only receives water one day a week at home. Many in the city only get water supplied one day per fortnight.

The mayor and several of the community petitioned the government to provide the pipes to connect the tank to the houses. Some still had pipes from the original tank, but the remaining houses have now been connected. They always have a better case with the government if they have managed to get outside help with a project.

Other communities have watched over the tank project, as water is a big problem in the area. They are hoping that we will also help them. However, this project cost £8000. Raising the money for it was not easy, so another water tank may or may not happen in the future. Time will tell.



- THE FINISHED WATER TANK -

SPONSORSHIP

This year has proven to be a great challenge to our team in Honduras, due to the severe flooding in many areas and, of course, the difficulties presented by the Covid pandemic. Your sponsorship has been a double blessing this year.

Schools have been closed and children asked to study from home, often with no internet, nor a reliable electricity supply.

Parents have lost even their part time work. The subsistence businesses, in cleaning or selling in the streets, have been closed down, leaving families without support or possibility of income.

Many children relied on receiving a small meal at school. CH Trust has made every effort to distribute extra food where we can. We have also continued to encourage families to keep up their children's education.

The cost of an individual sponsorship continues to be £60. However, costs continue to rise in Honduras. Due to the extra difficulties this year, many of you gave extra. This was allocated to our education fund, which has helped to support more children. A big thank you! Your donations have also been matched by money from our general fund, as the need is great and education for the children is such an important part of our mission in Honduras.

By changing the way in which we used the sponsorship money this year, we have been able to help thousands of children instead of hundreds. This new approach is liked in Honduras. To their way of thinking, when there are so many in great need, gifting everything to the same specific child each year is not really seen as fair. However, as run by other charities, individual child sponsorship is the generally recognised form in this country.

We distribute the sponsorship through eight different ministries in Honduras, working through schools and churches. Cesar's ministry alone provided 750 education packs for the children. Most have provided a similar selection of items such as exercise books, pens, pencils, crayons, scissors, glue, geometry sets etc. This allows children the essentials to work in school or at home. We have just learnt that many children had no education last year because the parents could not provide these essentials. So, the children could not complete the work set by the schools. Some schools provided lessons via the internet. However, some of those we support do not even have electricity and many do not have internet.

Some lessons are broadcast over the radio, so some effort has been made by the authorities. Even so, many have still been left out.

We contributed to the distribution of school work by purchasing four photo copiers, with paper and ink, so that work could be prepared each week for the children to collect from school.

We hoped this year would be better, it started well, with many children going into school for at least three hours a week. The children will be given homework for the rest of the week. (This may vary in different schools and parts of the country. I only have information about the Valle area). The children attend school, as year groups, on different days, to minimise contact. The latest news, however, is that a Covid variant has now reached Honduras which is affecting children and young people. So, the schools are starting to close again.

The country has no effective answers to Covid. The government has not, as yet, ordered any vaccines. In the meantime, many doctors and nurses have died from Covid as well as a large number of the population. Numbers are not reliable, as there is little testing and many in the countryside will not know what has caused death.

CHRISTMAS PARTY DINNERS

The children finished the year on something of a high note, as we were able to hold eight Christmas party dinners.

Pastor Jeronimo wrote from La Ceiba on the north coast:-

"We celebrated Christmas dinner with the children of the church. It was a great blessing to see the smiles of the children when they received their lunch. God has been good and he has never forsaken us. Thank you to CH Trust for making this blessing possible for the children."

The children, dressed up for the party, were very excited. They collected their food in groups and then took it home to eat. The youngest came first.

It is encouraging to see so many of them wearing masks.

FOOD BAGS FOR CHRISTMAS

Food wise, people in Honduras have had a lean year during 2020. As many were so desperate for food, we wanted to end the year well for them. So, CH Trust

was able to purchase upwards of 5000 additional food bags to be given out to the needy at the close of the year.



- CHRISTMAS PARTY DINNERS -

HURRICANE HAVOC

A category 4 hurricane, named Eta, crossed Honduras towards the end of 2020, this was followed two weeks later by Hurricane Iota, a category 5! The flooding in the north of the country was worse than that experienced with Hurricane Mitch some 22 years ago. This time, however, the central mountainous area and the capital were not badly affected.

In the north, many had to be rescued from off the roofs of their houses. Private, as well as military helicopters were used to rescue people from the floods. Boats also came into their own. Many lost everything, including their jobs, as the crops in this agricultural region were destroyed. Many roads and bridges were also badly damaged, in some cases destroyed, by the flood water.

CH Trust works with two ministries in the affected areas. We have sent supplies to them for many years, going back to when we sent containers. We continue to support them with educational sponsorship money. Some of the sponsored children were located in the areas worst affected by flooding. It was reported to us that some families had lost everything in the floods, including their dwelling. Others had lost the contents of their homes but were able to return to them.

For these families, drinking water and food were the first priorities. Next came other essentials such as a mattress to sleep on and small stoves to cook upon.

In Choloma, CH trust was able to help Pastor Francisco and his church to care for 21 families sheltering in their church building and local school. For some, this required ongoing residential care. For those who could return to their homes, small stoves, fuel and pans were purchased, as well as bags of basic foods.



- MUCH NEEDED EMERGENCY STOVES -

Even though some mattresses had been donated to the people, many children were still sleeping on the floor on cardboard. To address this problem, twenty-one mattresses were bought with CH Trust money. The recipients decided to leave the plastic external wrapping on to protect their mattress and keep it clean.

In San Pedro Sula, the second ministry, Pastor Abel and his team of helpers at church used CH Trust money to put up large bags of food and other essentials to help relieve the immediate situation of the flood victims. Red beans were purchased by the sack, weighed and split into smaller portions to get the best value for money.

Drinking water was also a big problem here. So, large one-gallon bottles were purchased. Mattresses were also seen as a priority. As Christmas approached, they gave out more food bags, which included a chicken and eggs for the family. What a blessing to these unfortunate families! However, CH Trust was only able to provide because of the generosity of those here in England who gave at this critical time. Thank you, is a gross understatement of how these families felt for the help that they received.



- A MEAL FOR A GIRL AFFECTED BY THE HURRICANE -



- MATTRESSES TO SLEEP ON -

VISIT TO THE TOLUPAN PEOPLE

As soon as the roads were passable after the hurricanes, Cesar went to visit the Tolupan people. He knew that they would be desperate for food because of the crop failure. He could only use small trucks as the mud track roads are very narrow. It is always good to have more than one vehicle, so that there is help if you slip off the road and get stuck. You are also less vulnerable to attack with a group of four or more people in two vehicles.

Alongside food, hygiene kits were given out to the Tolupan community. These consisted of a bar of soap, a sachet of chlorine gel and one or two cloth masks. The recipients put on their masks immediately!

The mums with babies or toddlers were given a yellow bag of dried milk.

350 fruit trees were given out. Fruit trees, when they mature, are food factories and less effected by lack of rain during the drought times they experience.

The children were given biscuits and a box of juice or milk.



- GIVING OUT FRUIT TREES -



- WOMEN RECEIVING BAGS AND TREES -

GUANACASTE FEEDING CENTRE

The children in the feeding centre are all in their Sunday best enjoying a good meal after the church service. This meal is open to all children in the area, not just church attendees. The church has run this feeding centre throughout the many months of lock down. As Tomas said, the children needed the cooked meal that they provided three times a week, lock down or not. So, they have continued with our financial help. As the schools that we support started to open, we also began to supply food for the children as before. The teachers and mums were also making plans of how to feed the children, should the Government close the country schools. The general idea is for the mums on rota to cook as usual at the school. The food would then be collected and taken home by the mums, rather than the children. I am sure that one mum would probably collect for several children living nearby.

The feeding centre run, with our donations, by the church in Pedrigal has continued to function. They started with 120 children, three days a week. This soon rose to 150 and then 250, as the food crisis continued. We have also increased the funding to cover four days a week. The ladies have done a tremendous job. These are the church ladies who delivered cooked food, door to door, to the children when lock down was imposed. The Government Decree during lock down only allowed an adult out of their home one day a week, based on their ID card. This was enforced by the police and military.



- CHRISTMAS DINNER WITH CHICKEN AND ORANGE -

HOUSES__

We have built over 130 houses since 2012, thanks to donations given for this purpose. Sadly the price of materials increase each year, as they do in England. Materials cost more in Honduras than we pay in the England. Cesar works very hard to keep prices down by talking the local builders merchants into donating some bags of cement or pieces of wood. The Mayor, Will, has been very good at giving land to those single mothers with children, who have such a great need for a home. They are top of Cesar's list of 100 people wanting a house.

A house allows mothers with children to have a safe place to live, without the need to pay a very expensive rent each month. Renting is so expensive in Honduras that the poorer people can often only afford to rent one room with shared washing and cooking facilities. If they cannot pay the rent at the end of the month they can, and often are, thrown out onto the street. As you know, paid employment is hard to come by in Honduras and not reliable. The end of the month often finds a family going without food for several days, including the children, so that they can pay the rent. Where a family can own their own property, the children can settle into one school for their education.

Sadly, the time has come to reset the donor price of the houses we build from £1600 to £2000. For some people, I have kept a running account, so that they give what they want in one year to be added to the following year etc until they

have accumulated the price of a house. Then they start again. This has allowed them to build houses, even though they could not pay outright for a house at a particular time.

In order to make savings and keep in budget, we are also reducing the size of the houses. The houses are so important, as a long-term investment into so many lives for years to come, that I would like to continue these projects. They are immensely valuable to the extent that they provide safety and stability to a family, while freeing up scarce finances to buy food and provide the basics required to access education for their children. In the next few months, as we complete our current builds ahead of the rainy season, we will have used all the funding specifically given for house building. This is the first time the situation has occurred for many years past. In recognition of this, building will have to stop until more funds are received.

The Honduran government is not building houses anywhere in the country, not even in the north, where many have lost their homes in the floods, along with all of their possessions.



- LENCA WOMAN WASHING POTS AT THE PILA IN HER HOUSE -

HYGIENE PACKS__

Cesar has carefully hunted for the items needed to make up hygiene packs, using as little money as possible. The packs consist of a large piece of hand soap, a sachet of bleach gel and two shaped cloth masks. It seemed pointless to buy

bags of food for people who might die from Covid because they could not afford masks. We have provided hundreds of these kits for Cesar to give out, along with his speech about good hygiene practice. We couldn't afford to buy kits for everyone but we have bought a lot. When you start adding noughts to the quantity of any item to be bought the pounds suddenly turn into thousands of pounds. The need is great but we can only supply a small part of it.

Many people have worked very hard to bring help and hope to many desperate people. This has only been possible because of gifts of money given to CH Trust, which I have sent out to people on the ground in Honduras. Thank you helping to make this possible, and improving what has been a terrible year for the people in Honduras. It has been a privilege to pass on your gifts to them.

EL RETIRO WATER PROJECT

In the last newsletter I shared with you plans for a water project in the village of El Retiro.

The 120 families living there lack any water services because of the remoteness of the village and because the village has been abandoned by the authorities. The community have tapped into a natural water source not far from the village, which they protect. People bring their water containers and fill them with the jug and funnel kept there.

Residents of the village stated that they do occasionally suffer intestinal diseases as a result of drinking water from their water source. However, it is the only water that the community has, since the municipal drinking water system does not reach this community. Some families take water from the town's taps and carry it in buckets to their homes to wash; this distance can be more than a kilometre.

Currently, many of the families wash their clothes in the local stream, which is later used by another village for drinking water!

The ladies also use four pilas to wash their clothes with water from the storage area. The water they use for washing clothes is a run off from the water source but it always seems to look very murky. This water is also used for bathing, as you do not carry water back home for a wash or shower.

The ladies have asked for extra pila spaces, as there is an optimum time slot to do the washing, which is not a quick job when washing by hand. The availability

of only four spaces means queuing for people or washing while exposed to the blazing sun.

The new facility funded by CH Trust provides 10 pila washing stations. This more than doubles what they had previously. The other bonus is that the water is brought nearer to them and has not been contaminated. A roof runs over the length of the pilas, providing protection from the sun and rain and thus, giving a nice working environment. The waste water from the project is filtered so that it is good to return to the river.

The ladies also asked if they could have cubicles built for the ladies and girls to use for the purpose of bathing. Until now, they have had to bathe in the open air, in view of everyone. The ladies and girls, therefore, washed fully clothed because there is no privacy. When you really think through what that is like you wonder how they cope.

As part of the project, two cubicles have been built, to which they have attached plastic curtains as doors. Solid doors have not been used to avoid the cubicles being occupied as shelters by anyone who might then fit a lock. A plastic curtain, which can be replaced periodically, was their preferred solution.

During the rainy season, provision has been made to collect water off the new roof, which can be used for washing. A large closed tank is also being purchased



- NEW COVERED PILAS AND CUBICLES -

to contain emergent spring water, which is good for drinking.

There will be a rota for maintenance of the area to prevent mosquitoes breeding. The drinking water tank cover will have a lock, so that the water can be protected, kept clean and chlorinated each week. The facility is open to everyone to use.

The people of the village have worked very hard, doing all they could under the supervision of Santos our builder. They are so proud of this new area that they have built seats out of spare building blocks. Trees have also been planted and ringed around by white stones. The trees will provide shade in the future and make the area look very attractive. Many letters of thanks have been received from grateful families.

The project was financed by a specific donation. It will last for many years and bring great benefit, at a number of levels, for the people of El Retiro. The ladies are especially happy, as we have improved their everyday living conditions.

HELP TO SELF-SUSTAIN__

As the rains start during the Honduras 'winter' season, this is the time to plant seeds. We have been supplying seeds to families and school gardens in the Valle area, as well as to the Lenca people. While doing this Cesar found that some families could not cultivate the seeds, as they did not own two essential tools. A machete to clear the land, which quickly reverts to jungle like growth. The other



- GROWING FOOD TO EAT AND SELL -

item is a large heavy hoe that they use to break up the soil, much as we would use a spade. We have therefore bought these items for 45 families in the Buena Vista and Gayobo villages. Cesar would not buy staves for the hoe as he said they were expensive and with a machete, they can make one. These two items cost us about £7 together. Now they can raise their own food this year and for many years going forward. He also took hoe heads to give to the Lenca communities.

We have equipped some who have land around their homes with seeds to provide their own food but many are not in this situation. We are also providing fruit trees for Lencas, Tolupan and people of the Valle area but these will take a few years to start to provide fruit. We buy young saplings as these are the cheapest and we can provide for more people. Water for many is still the biggest problem but also the most expensive.

This is a photo that has stayed with me from 2020. It was taken as our team were distributing food bags to desperate families. There was no food in the fields or gardens but this tree was in full fruit. Since seeing this I have been extra interested in CH Trust providing fruit trees. I realised that once established, they are food



- A GOOD CROP OF FRUIT -

factories which are less affected by extremes of weather.

We have taken over 2000 fruit trees to the Lenca communities over the last few years. Cesar buys the young saplings from a local nursery, choosing from a selection of fruit trees. Oranges of several varieties, lemons, avocado, mango and guava trees. Some have also been given to families in the Valle area.

THE BLESSING OF SECURITY

Giving people a home of their own provides stability and security for all of the family, especially the children, who soon learn the burden and consequences of not having money for the rent and no permanent school or friends. The end of each month also often means no food to eat for several days, as money is saved to pay for the rent.

CHALLENGES

As you have read, a lot of positive news has come out from Honduras. However, their situation has just taken a turn for the worse. This is because their harvests failed last year due to the rain and hurricanes. Since the government has not done anything to control prices, the result is that basic food prices have increased by 50%. This is in circumstances where few have employment and there is no state help. How the people survive, I do not know. The food bags that we give out, to provide some relief, include the same food each time. The cost of them has gone up, from just under £7, to £10 for the same bag during the last three months! We, in turn, are faced with the challenge to provide some 5000 food bags before the end of the year, if at all possible.

LOOKING AHEAD

We continue to feed and educate the children as well as doing some long-term projects that will improve lives for years to come, after our work in Honduras ends. Looking ahead, in a few months' time, we will still need a lot of money for food bags. The lack of available work will mean no food for so many families.

AMAZON SMILE

Together you have raised £41.64 with Amazon Smile over the Christmas three-month period. Thank you. If you want to join just click onto Amazon Smile. You then click on CH Trust as your chosen charity. After that, make sure you click on smile when you order on Amazon (Amazon saves your charity choice). It is easy to do, with no lengthy registration.

CONGRATULATIONS

We continue to feed and educate the children as well as doing some long-term projects that will improve lives for years to come, after our work in Honduras ends. Looking ahead, in a few months' time, we will still need a lot of money for food bags. The lack of available work will mean no food for so many families.

DONATION FORM

Please complete the form below and return with your donation. Please make cheques payable to "CH Trust". Address on the front cover.

I would like to:

- ☐ Donate to the General Fund
- ☐ Sponsor _____ (Number of children) with a full/half sponsorship for the next academic year

I have enclosed £ _____

| | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Standing Order | |  |
| I wish to support CH Trust for | | £ <input type="text"/> |
| Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> | Quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> | Annually <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Starting on <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> / <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> and thereafter until further notice | | |
| To the Manager Bank/Building Society | | |
| _____ Address: _____ _____ | | |
| _____ | | Postcode: _____ |
| Your account details | | |
| Name of Account Holder(s): _____ | | |
| Your Account No. | | <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> |
| Sort Code | | <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> |
| Signature(s): _____ | | Date: _____ |
| To (Bank) Name: HSBC | | Sort Code: 40-19-37 |
| Account No: 61589865 | | Account Name: CH TRUST |



**- YOUR SUPPORT ENABLING
MORE HUNGRY CHILDREN TO BE FED -**

GIFT AID FORM

If you are able and willing to grant to us Gift Aid, please complete the authorisation form below and send it with your donation.

I would like Gift Aid to be authorised for:-
(please tick all boxes you wish to apply).

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Today | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Back dated for the last four years | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| For the future | <input type="checkbox"/> |

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax each tax year.
I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1

Signature

Date

Address

Postcode

Please notify the charity if you decide to cancel this declaration or change your name or address or no longer pay sufficient tax.
