

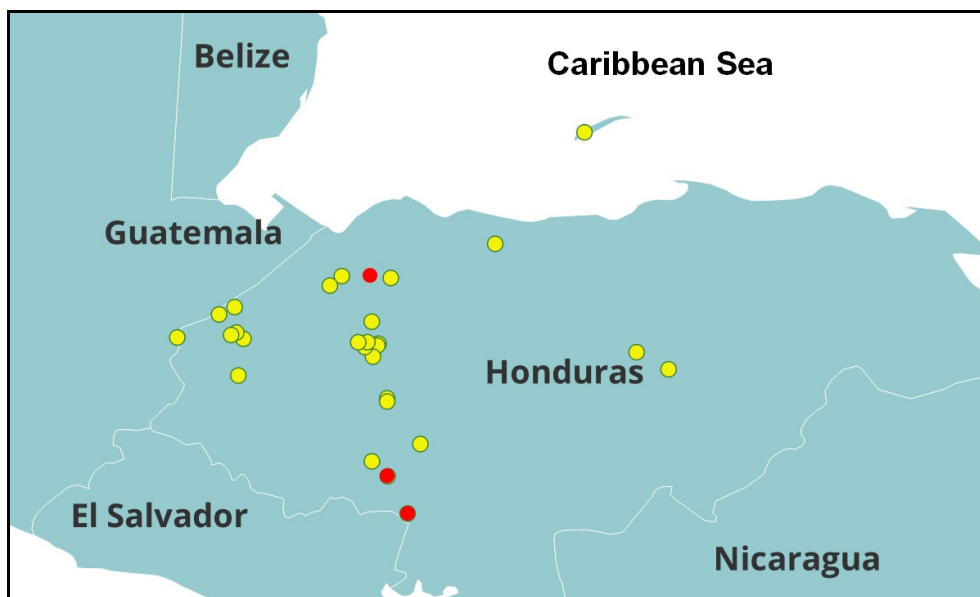
June 2023

Newsletter

Honduras

Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL)

After a break for the month of January, CPI's Honduran partner agency, Asociación Confraternidad Honduras (ACH), followed the Honduran school system in resuming operations at the beginning of February. ACH's main CAL school in Santa Cruz de Yojoa enrolled 95 students for the new term. A satellite school in Naco, a village of about 800 people in the Department of Santa Barbara, reopened with two students after having been closed because of the pandemic. ACH also opened new satellite schools in the city of La Lima (in collaboration with Osman Hope, a Christian charity working with Honduran children) and the villages of San Antonio del Norte and Guajiquiro.



Locations of CPI's schools in Honduras. The red circles denote the new schools in La Lima, Guajiquiro, and San Antonio del Norte (north to south).

New TStar Satellite Schools

In November, 2022, members of CPI's Working Tour to Honduras made presentations about the benefits of CAL to the pastors of churches in the remote mountain villages of San Antonio del Norte and Guajiquiro, close to the border with El Salvador (see Newsletter, December 2022). The pastors were keenly interested in the program and offered to house the schools in their churches. As a result, schools were opened in both communities on February 1, with enrolments of 32 and 6 students in San Antonio and Guajiquiro, respectively.



The church in San Antonio del Norte that is being used for the new CAL school in the community.

The funds for these "TStar" schools were raised after a CPI Board Director challenged the members of his TStar retirement club to donate money to establish a CAL school in a poor mountain village where many children can not afford education beyond Grade 6. Furthermore, the Director offered to match all donations dollar for dollar as an incentive to reach the target of \$10,000. More than \$11,000 was raised, an amount that was sufficient for both schools to be established. Twenty refurbished Chromebooks were purchased for the schools in Canada, and delivered to Honduras by the Working Tour.



One of the students at the new school in San Antonio del Norte is Marlon Zambrano, the pastor of a church in Aramecina, a town about a 40-minute drive away. Marlon, who has a Grade-6 education and had never seen a computer before, is studying the Grade-7 curriculum on weekends and hopes to eventually complete Grade 9. Currently he provides transportation for five other students so they can attend the TStar school. His desire is to have a CAL school in his own community of Aramecina.

Shipments to Honduras

An emergency shipment of supplies was assembled in Edmonton and arrived in Honduras in March, 2023. A 1-m³ container ("cube") was filled with 60 refurbished Thinkpad laptops, 12 desktops, and several other laptops. The computers were sent to replace obsolete and broken machines in the main school in Santa Cruz de Yojoa and the satellite schools.



Staff at the school in Santa Cruz de Yojoa unpacking the cube shipped from Edmonton.

A much larger shipment that has been in preparation for several years is almost ready. A 40-ft. sea can has been purchased and is being loaded with assorted, donated equipment. Nineteen cubes have been filled with 500 computers, and 70 bicycles have been serviced to ensure they are in working order. An appeal for sewing machines in *The Country Register (Alberta)*, a bimonthly publication aimed at the quilting and sewing community, was instrumental in CPI obtaining donations of more than one hundred sewing machines from around the province. Over half of these have been serviced already and when the remainder are done, they will all be packed in cubes as well. In addition, a large assortment of tools that has been accumulated for a mechanical vocational program is being sent. The sea can will also contain two cubes filled with equipment needed by Lead with Seeds, another Edmonton-based organization that is active in Honduras.





Cubes containing computers stacked in the sea can.



Bicycles packed on the floor and hung from the roof of the container.

2023 Learning Tours to Honduras

In March, Board Directors Gordon and Wendy Baergen led a group of 10 people on CPI's first Learning Tour to Honduras since early 2020. During their 10 days on the mainland, the group visited:

- several schools, including the campus in Santa Cruz de Yojoa; the new satellite schools in San Antonio del Norte and Guajiquiro; existing schools in Las Delicias, Siguatepeque, and Santa Elena; and an independent school for handicapped children;
- the model village of Tapiquiales, which was sponsored and constructed by CPI;
- several tourist sites, including Cerro Azul Meámbar National Park, the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Copan Ruinas, and the Luna Jaguar hot pools;
- a coffee processing plant and a coffee plantation.

Most tour participants ended the trip by joining the optional three-day excursion to Roatan Island.

Unlike what was done on previous Learning Tours, this group did not take any computer supplies with them. However, they did bring several hundred pairs of eyeglasses collected at the MCC Thrift Shop in Edmonton. The glasses were distributed to those could not afford to buy their own in the village of Tapiquiales and at other locations.



Women in Tapiquiales selecting eyeglasses.

As a final act of generosity, Tour members donated an additional total of 44,000 Lempiras (about 2,400 CAD) for two air conditioners for the main school in Santa Cruz de Yojoa. These units have been purchased and installed, ensuring much more comfortable conditions for the students and staff, as well as a better operating environment for the computers.

Upcoming Tours

A tour in late October, 2023, is in the early stages of planning. The itinerary would be similar to the one for the recent tour described above. Anyone interested in participating should contact Gordon Baergen (gdbaergen@gmail.com) or Wendy Baergen (wbaergen@hotmail.com).

Sub-Saharan Africa

Kenya

CPI's CAL program in Kenya is being administered by its partner agency, the Africa Peace Ministry Institute (APMI). APMI began as a community development organization called ACDC, which was founded by a group of mothers in Nairobi to provide an early childhood education program for neighbourhood children. The program was expanded to include keeping girls in school, a successful campaign against female genital mutilation, providing an education for orphaned children, providing free primary school education, and skills training for youth. In 2018, ACDC was registered with the government as an institution and became APMI. One of the founders of ACDC, Pamela Obonde, now is a member of APMI's management group for the CAL program.

The first school was opened in Ngong, a suburb of Nairobi in 2022. Currently, it offers introductory computer classes and vocational training in tailoring, hairdressing, and barbering. An academic CAL program will commence when APMI receives accreditation from the Kenyan government.



Computer instruction in the APMI school in Ngong.

A second school in Ngong, about 3 km from the first one, is being readied for opening in May, 2023. The site is the JuaKali Mechanics and Artisans Association Centre, where students learn trades such as auto mechanics, welding, carpentry, masonry, plumbing, the electrical trade, and food processing. The Board of JuaKali has allocated space to APMI to house a computer facility. Thus, vocational students at JuaKali, which does not have its own computing capacity, will be able to develop their computer skills to augment their practical training. CPI/APMI students will have access to the JuaKali programs.



The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Computer-Assisted Learning

The first CAL school in the DRC was opened in Kinshasa in 2021 by CALCongo, CPI's partner agency in the DRC. After some difficulty in finding a suitable facility for another school in Kikwit, (a city of about a half-million people), CALCongo eventually located a building belonging to the Congolese Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church. Renovations were made to the structure and the school was officially opened on February 11 in a formal ceremony with the Vice-Mayor of the city in attendance. Also present was Cood Tulengi, the Superintendent of schools for the MB school system in the DRC. Mr. Tulengi is highly supportive of CAL and has made the entire MB curriculum for Grades 1-12 available to CALCongo. The new school consists of two rooms, one with 22 computers for CAL education and the other with seven sewing machines for vocational training. In the first class, 63 students (36 female and 27 male) were enrolled in the CAL program and 15 for sewing instruction.



The first class in the new school in Kikwit

One of the students is 46-year-old Gizela, a woman who has been confined to a wheelchair since contracting polio at the age of two. Her affliction prevented her from attending school as a child, but now the CAL program offers her the opportunity to obtain an education. Although getting to and from the school involves Gizela's younger sister making two trips on a motorcycle—one to transport Gizela and the other her wheelchair—each way, Gizela has not missed a day of school. She used to sell doughnuts for a living; now she dreams of eventually completing Grade 12.



Classroom in CPI's CAL school in Kikwit. Gizela is shown in the foreground.

Distribution of Sanitary Kits to Young Women

For many Congolese girls the lack of access to, or the money to pay for, sanitary products during their menstrual periods can be a significant obstacle to attending school. Therefore Gloria and Theo Fumana, leaders of CALCongo, launched a project with the River West Christian Church in Edmonton to assemble hygiene kits consisting of small, sewn bags containing reusable, sewn sanitary pads; panties; and a bar of soap. On their trip to the DRC in March, the Fumanas distributed 66 kits in Kinshasa and Kikwit. To follow up on this initiative, the women in CALCongo's vocational sewing program will learn how to sew the sanitary pads.



The foregoing story illustrates one of the advantages of the CAL program, namely its flexibility. In a conventional school, students who are away from class for some reason miss out on learning the material taught during their absence; in a CAL school, however, the fact that they follow the curriculum on the computer at their own pace means that they simply continue learning where they left off before the interruption.

2023 CPI Annual General Meeting

The 2023 AGM will be held on June 11 at the farm of Board Director Phil Gaudet near Edmonton. For the first time since 2019, this meeting will be an in-person event. The Annual Report for 2022 will be available for downloading from the CPI web site at:

<https://www.canadianpeacemakers.org/annual-reports>

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://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/association-of-canadian-peacemakers-international-canada/> (monthly giving can also be arranged here).

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