

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2022  
ESPERANZAS UNIDAS**

**1. SUMMARY OF 2022 HIGHLIGHTS:**

2022 was an incredibly successful year for Esperanzas Unidas. At the beginning of the year, our organization settled into our new operational base, five manzanas (approximately nine acres) of land in Chaguiton, close to the town of Dulce Nombre, in the western State of Copan.

In addition to the massive effort to clean up the land from the previous owner, the 2022 year was focused primarily on developing our central programming efforts. Esperanzas Unidas's youth leadership program, "Leaders of Tomorrow," supported five exceptional young women to successfully complete their first year of high school on our full scholarship, as well as receiving weekly private tutoring in the English language and public speaking and leadership opportunities.

Our collaboration in a grant funded by the Dalberg Global Consulting Firm, with the Guatemalan construction company, CASSA, helped to launch our "Project Bamburas" and "Project Rosa" initiatives. In addition to funding the construction of a two-story bamboo home on our property, this effort also sponsored the planting of four manzanas (seven acres) of bamboo, as well as trainings for over 100 women from surrounding villages to learn about techniques on how to care for the bamboo plant, and how to create artisan projects with bamboo.

Finally, the Esperanzas Unidas team began the intensive effort to plan the logistical foundation for our Eco Tourism program, the "Bamboo Center for Culture and Education." Seeking to establish our land as a nucleus for the local Honduran community and international tourists to learn about traditional Honduran culture and the benefits of bamboo, this program will generate a new economy that will greatly benefit hundreds of women from neighboring villages.

While there remains a lot of work to complete, Esperanzas Unidas is very confident and optimistic that a solid foundation for success has been set in the 2022 year.

## 2. **“LEADERS OF TOMORROW” PROGRAM**

During 2022, Esperanzas Unidas revamped our scholarship program, enhancing it with an increase in opportunities to cultivate the leadership skills of the students we work with.

After a series of interviews with applicants in 2021, Esperanzas Unidas selected five exceptional young women to participate in our program during the 2022 school year (February – November):

- Gloria, 16 years old, from the village of Candelaria, Copan
- Valeria, 15 years old, from the village of Dulce Nombre, Copan
- Diana, 15 years old, from the village of Dulce Nombre, Copan
- Karol, 14 years old, from the village of Candelaria, Copan
- Britany, 14 years old, from the village of Dulce Nombre, Copan

Each youth committed to studying for the three years in the high school program our organization is paying their scholarship for, as well as participate in the different leadership programming we provide for them.

Esperanzas Unidas equipped each youth with their own personal laptop. Our “Leaders” received training in basic computational skills from our program coordinator, providing them with technical support as necessary. We also coordinated internet access for each youth so that they would be able to participate in their school expectations and the weekly English tutoring classes that Esperanzas Unidas organizes for them.

Among the many highlights for our “Leaders” in 2022, include helping to organize activities for our trainings on working with bamboo, as well as speaking in front of local business and political leaders at the inauguration event for the completion of our bamboo house.

Each “Leader” commented on the rewarding relationships and advancement in the English language that they received through our weekly English tutoring classes. Our volunteer tutors, Daniela, Chava, Fatima, Walker Mae, Ashley, Ava, Roxana, Jocelyn and Gabriel all followed a special curriculum created by Esperanzas Unidas during the year and noted the impressive improvement made by each “Leader.”

In June, Esperanzas Unidas began a entrepreneurial training program for our “Leaders” - a Chicken Egg Cooperative Business. Designed to provide hands-on business experiences for our “Leaders,” we supported them in building the chicken coop and preparing all of the supplies to begin this business. Through a number of workshops, our organization established a plan of action with the “Leaders” to begin this business in September.

Despite all of our efforts, our Chicken Egg Cooperative had a series of set backs that caused us to have to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. The rain and landslides closing local roads caused considerable challenges in getting the “Leaders” to our property to care for the chickens. Although we had a family taking care of the chickens when the “Leaders” were not there, the logistics became very challenging for our Team and for the youth. Additionally, despite fully vaccinating the chickens, many began getting sick and started to die. The bird flu has been a major problem afflicting Honduras as well as other parts of the world. We had a local expert come to our property to give us some advice as well as some additional medicine, however, the chickens continued to pass away one by one.

With all of these factors, we held a number of strategy meetings with the “Leaders” to figure out the best path forward. Many suggested that we sell the remaining chickens and use the money to buy tools to begin a Bamboo Art Cooperative, which is what we ended up doing. Esperanzas Unidas applauded the flexibility and maturity of the “Leaders” in making these challenging business decisions, always with the goal of success in their minds. The “Leaders” will begin this Bamboo Art Cooperative in early 2023.

Other highlights for our “Leaders of Tomorrow” program in 2022 include the end of the year celebration – a party to recognize the incredible efforts made by our “Leaders.” Additionally, Esperanzas Unidas also started a special partnership with the Mayor of the Municipality of Dolores, Mayor Mauro Diaz, and the village school in Camalote, Copan through a donation of a new computer and web camera. Mayor Diaz supplied the resources to connect the computer to the Internet so that Esperanzas Unidas will be able to collaborate on unique educational programming with the teachers and students of the school. Esperanzas Unidas is applying for grants that will fund an exchange between teachers and students in Camalote and in the United States of America, focusing on teacher training programs, English and technology tutoring opportunities, and an opportunity for students from Honduras and from the U.S. to meet and learn from one another.

As education is a primary focus of the mission for Esperanzas Unidas, with increased funding, we plan on offering more opportunities for young women to join our Leadership program, as well as incorporate additional village schools into our educational programming.

### 3. "PROJECT BAMBURAS"

In 2022, Esperanzas Unidas planted seven acres of bamboo on our land in Chaguiton and in Vega Redonda through a special initiative with the CASSA company. There are multiple ways in which this bamboo will revolutionize the work that Esperanzas Unidas is able to realize with the communities we serve.

Once matured, this bamboo will be used to create business endeavors for women through the construction of bamboo-related products, including, homes, posts, furniture, and artisan projects.

Between January 2022 and July 2022, Esperanzas Unidas coordinated with the CASSA company from Guatemala to import a number of shipments of bamboo that were used to build the two-story home on our land as well as serve for the bamboo artisan projects. CASSA also provided Esperanzas Unidas with hundreds of bamboo starter plants to create a nursery on our land, which was used when planting the bamboo on our land, and, which will eventually be used to initiate our "Bamboo in my Backyard" project, bringing bamboo directly to the homes of the women from the villages we have been working with. Because bamboo plants continue to regenerate themselves, these plants will provide a source of revenue for these families for years to come.

In July, Esperanzas Unidas celebrate the completion of the bamboo house project with CASSA through a special inauguration gathering. In attendance were local political and business leaders, many of whom Esperanzas Unidas plans on collaborating with in order to increase the supply of bamboo in Honduras, as well as organizing future tourist-related initiatives revolving around the promotion of bamboo.

Because bamboo has the added bonus of contributing positive benefits to the environment, preventing landslides through the stabilization of the land, and through the absorption of carbon dioxide, Esperanzas Unidas plans on enhancing the production of our bamboo nursery so that we can plant additional crops of bamboo. Additionally, Esperanzas Unidas will apply for the carbon credits that correspond to the quantity of bamboo on our land, which will provide a source of financial support for our operations.

#### 4. "PROJECT ROSA"

"Project Rosa" seeks to empower cohorts of women through entrepreneurial training and hands-on projects with the goal for them to receive the experience and financial savings necessary to begin their own independent business endeavors.

Through our partnership with the CASSA company, we were able to organize trainings for hundreds of women from the surrounding villages. The Mayors of the Municipalities of Dolores and Dulce Nombre supported this project by helping to coordinate transportation from the villages to our land, as well as through the provision of logistical support. While our initial goal was to have fifty women participate in these trainings, we had one hundred attend the first day's session, and one hundred and twenty attend the second day's training. The demand for participation was so high that we had to unfortunately turn away women who were interested in participating.

These trainings included a session with experts from Guatemala dedicated to understanding the science behind the care for the bamboo plant. This session ended with a special ceremony in which participants planted the first bamboo plants on our land. The second training focused primarily on how to use cured bamboo to produce a number of different artisan items. Esperanzas Unidas has been working throughout the year to develop a number of prototype designs for bamboo artisan products that we plan on creating with the women from the villages and selling in the local markets and to international tourists. This effort will provide an important source of revenue for the women that we are working with.

Additionally, Esperanzas Unidas began a unique program to cultivate the carpentry skills of women from the local villages. Our two first participants, Alba and Leslie, worked alongside the crew of men that were building the bamboo home, learning important techniques as they progressed, as well as destroying the myths of the capacity that women have to engage in construction work. As we progress, Esperanzas Unidas plans on training and creating teams of women to build our future bamboo infrastructure, as well as building bamboo homes for private clients through "Project Rosa."

## **5. “BAMBOO CENTER FOR CULTURE AND EDUCATION”**

The “Bamboo Center for Culture and Education” is centered around Esperanzas Unidas’s vision of creating opportunities for women from local villages to promote and celebrate traditional Honduran culture and the environmental benefits and science of bamboo.

In 2022, Esperanzas Unidas connected with the mayors of the two major municipalities in the region, Dolores and Dulce Nombre, presenting information about how our Eco Tourism initiative enhances the tourism platforms that they are developing. Both were very excited at the potential that our Center will have to bring both local and international tourists to the region and put us in touch with their departments of tourism to continue the conversation.

Throughout 2022, our organization was focused on beginning to establish the infrastructure for this Eco Tourism initiative. We constructed a new public bathroom for guests and also began rehabilitating two homes that were left by the previous owner. These two homes will be converted into a future space for an exhibit on coffee production, traditional bread making, and bamboo craft making, as well as a future gift shop where visitors can purchase some of the bamboo artisan products made by local women.

Another exciting development in 2022 related to our Bamboo Center for Culture and Education is a project that we have started with Dr. Gerardo Aldana, Director of Repository for Archaeological and Ethnographic Collections through the University of California, Santa Barbara. Considered to be one of the leading experts in Mayan history and culture, Dr. Aldana is working with Esperanzas Unidas on a special curriculum designed to both educate visitors of traditional Honduran culture at our Bamboo Center for Culture and Education, as well as in the schools of the United States.

## **6. ANNUAL VOLUNTEER TRIPS TO HONDURAS**

Esperanzas Unidas is planning annual volunteer trips with interested parties. Scheduled to take place July of each year, Esperanzas Unidas has advertised this opportunity to the public. These volunteer trips will allow participants to engage in hands-on service projects, and to gain an intimate understanding of traditional Honduran culture.

## **7. ADMINISTRATION**

Esperanzas Unidas successfully connected with a network of nonprofit organizations and foundations in 2022 in the United States of America, as well as throughout the world.

These connections allowed for Esperanzas Unidas to further explore funding options for new project opportunities, including with USAID.

## **8. FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

The following donations were received by Esperanzas Unidas in the 2022 fiscal year:

1. Light of Esperanza: \$28,953
2. Loan from Angela Madrid Lara and Shmuel Rubinstein: \$17,877
3. In-kind donation of use of land from Angela Madrid Lara and Shmuel Rubinstein: \$6,000

98% of the total budget was used for Programming Expenses (1,009,284 Lempira = \$42,054), 2% of the total budget was used for Administrative Expenses (20,688 Lempira = \$862).