

## April 2023 Project Update

By Nicola Lawson. UK Manager & Trustee

### Safety and the chance to thrive

In January 2023, thanks to your support, the Sisters of Mary schools in Tegucigalpa and Amarateca were able to welcome more of the country's poorest boys and girls into places in their care.



(New boys and girls being welcomed into the boys' and girls' schools (Amarateca and Tegucigalpa) in Honduras)

These are children who have suffered the most from the long-term impact of the Covid pandemic.

As the economy contracted, the poorest families have lost the menial jobs on which they relied. Unable to feed or educate their children, boys and girls are neglected and malnourished, vulnerable to abuse inside and outside their home and involvement in gang violence. They were an urgent priority for support and thanks to you, the Sisters were thrilled to be able to bring 378 of these children into a safe place at their schools.

One of these new young boys joining the boys' school in Amarateca is **Frandi**. 13 years old from San Miguelito Intibuca, Honduras. He lives with his father, a construction worker and with three other siblings. He had a very difficult early life and was devastated by the premature death of his mother when he was very young.

In her absence, Frandi tried hard to help his father to earn money to feed the family by working in construction. He also learned how to repair cars. Despite this, there was never enough money for food, Frandi was hungry and malnourished. His future looked bleak until he met the Sisters of Mary.



On 6<sup>th</sup> January this year, with your funds, we were delighted to make a school place available and welcome Frandi into our school. He says **“the opportunity to be here at the school of the Sisters of Mary gives me light from my past experience. And I’m so happy that I can study well and to have a better future.”**

## Learning and Growing

Thanks to you, the boys and girls now in our care are receiving a quality education and vocational training. Having missed much of their foundational education, the children have lots to learn but they are enthusiastic students and loving their new opportunities at school. With your donations over the last few months we have been able to provide additional teaching time to help the boys and girls catch up and reach the level required to be work ready when they are older.

These new children bring the total at the schools for this year to 1482 and, with regular nutrition and the care of the Sisters, all the children are growing fast and enjoying the comforts of a proper childhood. Alongside a busy timetable of lessons, the children pursue hobbies and are passionate about sports and keeping fit. Importantly though, your support ensures they can enjoy those special milestone moments which so many children are able to take for granted and which are so important for confidence and growth, like celebrating Easter.



Easter celebrations at the schools this month

## Future Employment

As well as a full timetable of academic lessons, all the children at school learn relevant vocational skills which will help them find work when they graduate. For the girls this includes culinary arts, dressmaking and computing and for the boys, industrial skills like welding, electronics, computer hardware servicing and car mechanics.



(Senior student in welding class, Amarateca)

The lessons are tailored to the needs of local companies to maximise employment at graduation.

At the end of December, 255 children graduated from school ready for the world of work and have now progressed into careers in electronics and engineering, tailoring, catering and mechanical engineering.

Many of the children have been able to secure part-time places at university and the most recent graduates have gone on to study nursing, pharmacy, engineering and architecture.

## The Multiplier effect of your support

When our children receive an education that leads to a secure job and a regular income, they are able to support themselves into a better life. They are however also able and motivated to provide life changing support to generations of their families and members of their local community. They go on to provide better accommodation, access to healthcare and infrastructure services like water and electricity for parents, access to education for siblings (and sometimes their children) and ultimately lift entire families and communities out of poverty permanently. For every child educated, hundreds of lives are improved because of the impact of your gift.



One of our students surrounded by his grateful family

None of this life-saving work would be possible without your generosity.

**Thank you** for transforming the lives of the poorest children in Honduras.