

Family

2020 Annual Report



URBANPROMISE HONDURAS

"UPH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO MY SELF-CONFIDENCE. DESPITE MY FEARS, I KNOW I CAN BE BRAVE AND BE A LEADER IN MY COMMUNITY."

"WHEN I CAME TO UPH, I UNDERSTOOD THAT LIFE IS NOT JUST THINKING ABOUT ME, BUT [...] THAT I WAS BORN TO SERVE, TO BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE AND CONTRIBUTE TO IMPROVING THIS WORLD."

"UPH MODELS AN EXAMPLE OF SERVICE THAT EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT, WHICH HAPPENS BECAUSE WE FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS AS SERVANT LEADER."

Over the past several years it has been common to hear various staff members describe **UrbanPromise Honduras in similar language.** One word in particular keeps repeating itself—*family*. I've heard it frequently and have always known it to be true, but perhaps I never took much time to consider why so many make this connection to family. **Belonging, acceptance, safety, strength, unity?** Whatever the reasons were before, they were put to the test in 2020—and the family flourished.

Early into the pandemic a good friend advised me that the entities who are to survive will have to be willing to reinvent themselves as if they were a startup. Personally that didn't sound all too bad because it was one of my favorite stages in our organizational life. But to carry a couple dozen staff through a startup phase with no warning and while gatherings are restricted to a virtual format, is intimidating, paralyzing and exhausting.

What appeared to be an unnavigable path forward, lost its stifling grip over us as the bonds of family further permeated our organizational culture. Without realizing it, we all began carrying each other, and we launched ourselves into this new season stronger than before.

We organized ourselves early on and leaned into new rhythms and opportunities. There was now both a reason and a platform for UrbanPromise sites across Latin America to gather for mutual encouragement, inspiration and learning. Weekly prayer and workshops became a new normal. **The strengthening of the UrbanPromise tapestry in Latin America was set in motion as our identity as a family was growing.**

We know that the essence of family experienced through UrbanPromise will be expanding in Latin America over the coming years. **We pray that our success is multiplied exponentially with an eternal impact, as more leaders are equipped and empowered to realize their vision that will change the world.**

Thank you for taking your unique place in our family in 2020 and the years to come!

Un fuerte abrazo,

Blair Quinius
FOUNDER & CEO



May the peace and grace of Christ be with each of

you. Thank you for taking the time to read this report, where you will find incredible results from a year full of uncertainty. *2020 has left us with sad memories due to COVID-19, but it has also left a legacy of innovation and adventure.*

At the beginning of 2020, we were ready with our dreams, goals, and plans; when suddenly the global pandemic put a stop to everything that was written in our calendars.

Week in and week out, we held onto hope that the quarantine would end, at the same time leaning into the new routine and reality, **searching for strategies to continue serving and sharing the love of Christ with our kids and youth.**

One day in particular, after so many virtual meetings, I was exhausted and overwhelmed. **It was only when I sought out God's presence to complain to Him that I understood that I would need the patience and hope that can only come from Him.**

I have felt God's help because He gave us wisdom to always keep our inner lights on and take that light to families, youth, and kids in moments of difficulty.

Perhaps COVID-19 and other tragedies, such as the two back-to-back hurricanes that hit Honduras in November, have come to dust off forgotten words: **solidarity, gratitude, love.** Perhaps we are all receiving a direct message that it is time to take action.

I feel proud and honored by the results we have seen in each of our programs, thanks to the leadership and service of UPH staff.

Thank you for taking action in 2020, for opening your arms and sending us love and support in so many different forms.

Hoping in the Lord that He will accompany and surprise us this year in His perfect will,

Londin Velasquez
UPH DIRECTOR



AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM



Our AfterSchool Program looked quite different in 2020, as we weren't able to meet in person for the majority of the Honduran school year (March - November). Nonetheless, ***our dedication to meeting the needs of our community could not be detained.*** Throughout the year, our AfterSchool Program provided:

- Individual tutoring via phone and video calls
- Weekly devotionals and prayer with parents of participants

- Monthly food, education, and hobby kits for kids to use at home
- Training for parents and children in the use of apps like Zoom

- A baby chick for each child to care for in order to grow in responsibility
- Weekly virtual camp

3 CAMPS

Alabanza (Praise)
Vida (Life)
Libertad (Freedom)

CLASSES IN:

Bible
Spanish
Math Reinforcement

138

children served

VACATION CAMPS

In January, during public school vacation, we held five high-energy, fun-filled camps that gave over 200 kids a safe space to play, learn, interact, and grow. We also continued the long-standing tradition of hosting our bilingual summer camp during private school vacation in July, this time innovating with a virtual format while still providing kids with productive entertainment and a sense of belonging.

6 CAMPS

Alabanza (Praise)

Gracia (Grace)

Promesa (Promise)

Luz (Light)

Hope

Joy (bilingual)

224

kids in January

camps

38

kids in bilingual

summer camps

1

international

volunteer





What does one expect to see in the streets of Copán? Now that most schools in town are operating only online and many establishments are closed, we don't see kids with backpacks and uniforms running and playing on their way to school. We don't see tourists wandering the cobblestone streets taking photos and looking for souvenirs.

What one certainly wouldn't expect to see are young adults donning colorful capes, tutus, and Minnie Mouse ears. But that is what was seen all across town the day after Honduran Children's Day as our AfterSchool Program staff took to the streets with gifts and a mission to deliver a little bit of joy to our camp kids despite the chaos that has derailed the experiences they expected to have in 2020.

Since some of the kids are newer to the program, there were some houses our directors had never been to before, but they searched until they found them—not an easy task in a place where an address typically consists of nothing more than the name of the neighborhood and a vague description of the location. Our superheroes and clowns knocked on door after door and were met with smile after precious smile. One boy was even moved to tears at their arrival.

"My teacher didn't visit me for Children's Day. I feel like she doesn't love me," the boy confessed as his gratitude for the visit rolled down his cheeks. With a sincere hug and smile, our directors expressed equal gratitude for the opportunity to show God's familial love to that boy and his peers.

YOUTH PROGRAM

In 2020, our Youth Program focused more than ever before on empowering the teens in our programs to dream and to achieve their potential. Because our regularly scheduled activities were shaken up, we were challenged to think creatively about how to engage youth from their homes. Despite the challenges, we were able to:

- Support our three camp captains (teens who assist in leading and serving their peers in camp) in launching their own entrepreneurial projects from home
- Train and equip youth to create their own home gardens

- Purchase cell phones and internet credit for youth to complete their school work and serve in virtual camps
- Send students to The Leadership Center* and local music classes
- Provide food and education kits

- Run a local weekly television program during quarantine providing biblical reflections and at-home challenges
- Provide tutoring, mentoring, and group reflections via phone and video calls

120
youth leaders

25
Leaders-in-Training

9
youth volunteers

SCHOLARSHIPS

15
high school
recipients

4
university
recipients

2
recipients for
The Leadership
Center*

6
music class
recipients



*a college-level educational and spiritual development program in rural Honduras

URBANTREKKERS



In June 2020, our UrbanTrekkers director of the last five years, Luis, resigned and left a new Trekker in his place. We welcomed Frelin as the new head of our outdoor adventure program at a time when most people were forced to stay indoors. However, Frelin quickly rose to the challenge and began contributing his own talents, knowledge, and unique leadership style to mold the UrbanTrekkers program into just what our youth needed in this particular season. This included activities like:

-At-home virtual “sleepovers” with staff and youth including backyard camping, classic “Trekkers pizza” and hot chocolate for the whole family, a movie showing via Zoom, and a virtual talent show

-Training and providing materials to youth and staff for home gardens with the support of organizations like **EUROSAN** and **CASM**
-Community cleanup and recycling contests

-Providing food packages to a group of Trekkers cyclists in the community of Nueva Esperanza
-A hike and workshop with UPH staff to learn about plants and natural medicine

Denia has been involved at UPH since she was a kid at Camp Hope. In the last few years especially, she has been a clear example of one of UPH's core values in particular: excellence.



In her time as a leader in camp, in UrbanTrekking activities, and more recently as assistant in our UrbanPromise Latin America office, Denia has exhibited the same exceptional level of leadership and responsibility that her teachers and peers testified to seeing from her in school.

These qualities allowed Denia to be accepted to The Leadership Center, a college-level educational and spiritual development program in Zambrano, Honduras. And not only that, but she was also granted a scholarship from UPH.

Recently, as Denia and her peers at TLC were getting ready for a short break from the program, her teachers asked the students to take a book from the center's library to read while they were away.

As Denia browsed the shelves, one little yellow book caught her attention.

"Quinius" read the spine, and Denia's heart leaped at the familiarity. Our founder Blair's book, *Sitting in the Circus: Finding Promise in an Unassuming Place*, went home with Denia that day and stayed by her side during her vacation.

It was a beautiful moment for Denia to read something like her family history, impactful stories of hope ranging from the first days of UPH to the present day. She, who was and is part of this grand story, now had the chance to see it from the outside in (in English, which she is learning at TLC) and gain a whole new love for the community—the family—that helped form her and lead her to where she is today.



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

*Since we welcomed **Londin** as our new director in late 2019, there has been a renewed emphasis in UPH on caring for the wellbeing of staff and their families, as well as on forming structures and systems that facilitate greater organization, communication, and sustainability. Some of these initiatives in 2020 were:*

- Professional and academic development through courses with an online program called **Biblica Virtual**
- The creation of a staff advisory board
- Beginning the process of legal non-profit incorporation in Honduras

- The creation and implementation of a staff savings cooperative
- The development of our new three-year strategic plan titled, “**Cultivating Sustainability**”
- A local staff retreat to rest, reflect, and cast vision for 2021

- Duolingo challenges and English classes from English-speaking current and former staff members during quarantine
- Corporate fasting, prayer, and Bible study



FINANCES & INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

During a year of unprecedented programmatic upheavals, and at a time when many forecast doom for organizations dependent on giving; we were met with unprecedented generosity from our donor base.

You always seemed to be one step ahead of us. Truly, you encouraged, inspired, and challenged us forward, even when the path was fear-filled and unclear.

We would like to give a special **THANK YOU** to all of the individuals and groups who led peer-to-peer fundraising initiatives on our behalf in 2020. You love this ministry, and you were courageous in telling your friends and asking them to join, kindling a spark that resulted in **more new donors and more support than ever before!**

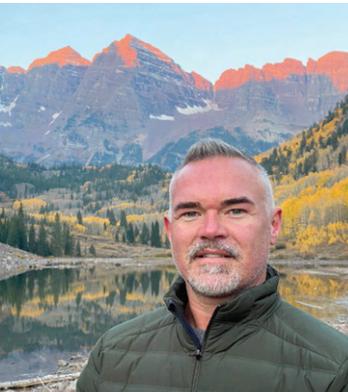
Every good thing represented in this Annual Report is thanks to the 521 people who believed in us and so generously put their trust and finances in our care.

Thank you!



\$340,124
TOTAL INCOME

\$321,112
TOTAL EXPENSE



Diony, one of our Youth Program directors, got an alarming phone call one Sunday morning. Doris, one of the youth leaders who has been with us for several years now, called to tell him that a landslide from the previous night's big rain storm had washed away one of the walls of her family's house.

She and her dad, her two siblings, and her three half-siblings moved in with her grandmother for the time being. Doris told Diony she was worried and was considering dropping out of school in order to work and help pay off a loan to repair the house.

Diony reminded Doris that *in UPH, we're family*. He encouraged her to have faith and continue focusing on her studies, promising her that we would help in whatever way we could. Doris was grateful for Diony's words, and even more grateful when he told her a couple of days later that UPH had approved a budget of one quarter of the cost of reparations for the house. Her dad even gave Diony another call to personally thank him and UPH for the support.

"IN UPH, WE'RE FAMILY"

Doris also forms part of a new entrepreneurship effort within UPH, where the captain of each of our three camps is given a small budget and empowered to complete an entrepreneurial project. In addition to working on the reconstruction of the wall, Doris has also been able to begin building an oven at the house to bake bread that she can sell. This is an investment that will serve her and her family as well as allow her to pay for her school expenses, while learning important life and business skills.



Like Doris and her dad, we are incredibly grateful for your constant support, which allows us to be there for our community and to build up what has been torn down, even in the wildest and most unpredictable of times.

Thank you!
Sincerely,
Your UPH Family

Thank you once again for believing in our vision of inspiring servant leadership! ***We have exciting updates coming soon that will allow you to be part of building the future of UPH for decades and generations to come.***

We also have ambitious and exciting plans for our normal operations this year, 2021. Our projected budget for this calendar year is **\$378,946**. *This will allow us to begin and expand new youth entrepreneurial initiatives, educate camp families on the psychological and social needs of their children, and continue providing the academic support and Christian leadership training we are known for.*

We will also make significant investments in our most important asset—our staff—by developing *a more comprehensive compensation package including education stipends, savings incentives, and health support.*

All of this is possible because of you! We ask you to prayerfully consider your participation this year so that we can continue this impact.

urbanpromisehonduras.org

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Do you have greatly appreciated stock? Email us at
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