



Lindsey and Steve Poulson

Link Letter no. 15 | June 2023

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Location: Honduras



What we do: Mentoring, creating safe spaces for at-risk children and young people to grow and supporting local project development.

Hello from Honduras!

It's hard to believe we are already halfway through 2023! As we have considered what to share from the past months, we have realised there has been a lot of **struggle** – or as Steve put it, having to “fire on all cylinders” (a new English phrase for Lindsey). That is *not* to say everything is going poorly or that we have seen no progress, quite the opposite! As we walk alongside struggling people – or are even struggling ourselves – we must depend even more on the Lord's strength, and his light has the potential to shine even more prominently in the midst of the darkness.

The academic year is now in full swing, and the 50 young people of Proyecto Alas are technically halfway through their second term. However, this year we are seeing an increased number who are not consistently going to school, nor attending activities at the Proyecto Alas mentoring centre. It seems the excitement of 2022 to return to classes after the intense pandemic lockdown has worn off, and the draw of the streets has become ever more enticing in 2023. For the younger ones, the freedom from authority and supervision is far more appealing than the rules and structure of a classroom. For the teenagers, the instant gratification of pocket money from selling on the streets (even if they earn well below minimum wage) is much more tempting than the long-haul effort required to graduate and get a better job in five or more years. *Please pray for the Alas team encouraging these young people to value their education, and that the positive environment of belonging within the Alas family would draw them in.*

This year, four adolescent Alas boys passed the entrance exam to a residential Christian school, El Sembrador (“The Sower”). These boys are some of the most academically capable in Alas, but are from some of the most difficult circumstances. In early February, Steve drove a bus packed with the boys, their mothers and all their supplies (including mattresses!) the three-hour trip from Talanga to drop the boys off. They seemed to adapt extremely well at first; after only one month we got a call that none of their uniforms fit, as they were actually eating three proper meals a day! However, after the first holiday in April (meaning one week home again) the boys struggled to go back to school, which affected their behaviour upon returning to their classes. The one who struggled most was Carlitos...

Just 24 hours before arriving at El Sembrador for his first day of class, Carlitos was about to join the local gang in Talanga. In the end, he decided to go to El Sembrador to study instead – a potential 180-degree



The El Sembrador boys on their first day (top) and one month later (bottom). Carlitos is in the yellow shirt.

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To the edges**



change in his life course! However, you might be able to take the child out of the street, but taking the street out of the child is a longer process. At just 13 years old, Carlos is used to his independence and has struggled to submit to authority and rules at El Sembrador. He also continues to be distracted by an offer from his older brother to help him get to the USA illegally. Just as he was about to be expelled from El Sembrador, some conversations with Steve and the Alas coordinator, Lorena, brought some positive breakthrough for him. *Please pray for Carlitos in his struggle with the promises of his new life that are constantly at odds with the temptations of his old one.*

The transition programme has grown, with two young men studying in trade programmes and four studying at university. All are going through their own struggles, but one has had a particularly hard time emotionally. In March he attempted suicide by overdosing on sleeping pills. We were able to rush him to the hospital where he was stabilised, but it was obviously a difficult experience for everyone. We have found psychiatric support for him, along with prayer and care from his community. In spite of everything, he miraculously still passed all his classes! *Please pray for this young man in his fight for his mental health.*

We made other trips to the hospital: one of the Alas girls, Zoeymi, was rushed to the hospital with appendicitis, and had to return twice more due to complications from not receiving proper care during her surgery. We finally took her to a private hospital where she received better treatment, and she has now fully recovered. We hosted Zoeymi and her mother in our home for many of those unstable days, and were amazed at the growth of her mother's faith during that time. We witnessed miracle after miracle of the Lord protecting Zoeymi's life and providing needed people and resources at just the right times. We are thankful that this month-long struggle has a positive ending!

We do not share these stories of struggle to discourage you, but to invite you to join us in prayer for these situations. Though we struggle, we know that nothing is impossible for Jesus, and he is the One fighting with and for us! Pray that the Lord will give us insight for how to "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12), of course prioritising times of personal rest and renewal.

Much love,

Lindsey and Steve Poulson

P.S. We are coming to England for six weeks in June and July!

We have already set dates to speak at our link churches, so we hope to see many of you at one of those presentations. If you would like to arrange a separate time to meet, please do get in contact.



Photos from top to bottom: Zoeymi (left) with her mother after her first surgery; We celebrated King Charles's coronation with a sleepover for the Alas young people, staying up until 3am to watch the ceremony; 12 April is International Day of the Street Child. Proyecto Alas organised a march of 300 students through town, followed by a programme in the central park promoting children's rights. The event was covered by several local news stations, and the mayor's office provided their support (and refreshments!).



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Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/nevergiveup

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