



**INFORMATION  
BROCHURE**



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**UNICEF ESTIMATES  
THERE ARE OVER  
170,000  
ORPHANS  
IN HONDURAS**

# HISTORY OF ORPHAN CARE IN HONDURAS

Honduras is the second poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. Nearly 2/3 of the nation's population lives below the poverty line. Some of the primary causes of why there are so many orphans seem to be because of the natural disaster of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, the rise of AIDS, the crime and violence level, and the extreme poverty. Due to the nature of these cases, the timeframe when they occurred, or simply when awareness hit the Western world, orphan care commenced and remained in what we refer to as emergency care mode. Since there was no government support for poor communities or families, the easiest solution and only known solution realized by organizations was to provide orphanages that would care for masses of vulnerable children. Thus, the majority of orphaned, abandoned, and at-risk children have been for decades placed in residential homes (orphanages).

While this effort did get thousands of vulnerable children off the streets, fed, clothed, educated, and out of abusive situations; the continual use of residential homes as a permanent placement rather than transitional has in itself created a system dependent on institutionalization. This effort caused the Honduran government to lean on institutions to care for vulnerable children thus they have made minimal efforts to support struggling families or provide family-based care options (such as foster care or kinship care). In addition, poor families have become accustomed to making the difficult decision of giving up their children to the residential homes in the hope of a better future because there was no other assistance or resources available to strengthen their families. And for the longest time, efforts at reintegration or processing children for adoption rarely occurred.

Currently, there are hundreds of residential homes scattered throughout the country. These homes have numbers ranging from 7-600 children on campus. Many are the dormitory, institution-style, and only a handful aim for a family-style model. Sadly, this results in a very low percentage of success once the children age-out into society.



## **60% OF YOUNG ADULTS AGING OUT OF ORPHANAGES HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO RETURN TO A LIFE OF POVERTY OR CRIME, CONTINUING THE ORPHAN CYCLE**

After over ten years of serving in the orphan care world of Honduras (2006-2014), we knew the names of young adults that proved that staggering statistic to be true. While some orphan care organizations had been able to minister randomly to various parts of the spectrum, there weren't any of us, that we knew of, fully involved in anything except at the orphanage level; including ourselves. After realizing that despite our efforts in assisting struggling orphanages, and their many efforts in providing for many children, there was still such a large percentage of young adults returning to society only to continue the battle with poverty or crime.

A huge realization sunk in; while we were all involved largely in orphan care, we were all mostly focused in one aspect of the spectrum, just orphanages, and that wasn't cutting it for the majority of the children in care. The diagram on the next page displays the areas that are needed to provide a full spectrum of orphan care and thus reach a place where vulnerable children are receiving permanency and the best placement possible for them individually. All of our previous orphan care efforts had been in ministering to the needs of orphanages, many of which were providing much-needed food to feed the children on campus. There were very few if any efforts in moving the children up the spectrum of care. While reintegration or adoption wouldn't be possible for every child, those solutions would be possible for the majority of them. I'm sad to admit that it wasn't even on our radar as a ministry! But God has been equipping us individually and maneuvering miracles among the government since 2014 to bring about a full spectrum of care for these kids He loves so dearly. It is a crucial and amazing time to be involved in orphan care in Honduras.

We want to equip you to be able to share the message about what is happening and how God is using His people NOW to change an entire country's orphan care system. A new government entity (DINAF) was created in 2014, with the plan of utilizing the help of non-profit organizations in their children and family services.

With the founding of Identity Mission, we were in a prime spot to begin launching a full foster care program in its beginning stages; working alongside DINAF welfare offices and promoting family-based care as a top solution for vulnerable children. Grasp with us the amazing power of our Lord; that He is using Christians to turn an entire country to best orphan care practices which is: A FAMILY FOR EVERY CHILD: declared by UN Standards of Care, but more importantly established by God!

# MAKING SENSE OF ORPHAN CARE

As you can imagine, it was a journey of learning from the top global researchers on global orphan care to arrive at the understanding that family-based care was a better solution to the orphan crisis. We didn't arrive overnight, but once we did, it was impossible for us not to share the impact of our journey with others.

## FIVE TYPES OF ORPHANS

**TRUE ORPHANS OR DOUBLE ORPHANS:** a child that does not have a mother nor a father due to their death

**SINGLE ORPHANS:** a child that has lost one of their parents due to death

**POVERTY ORPHANS:** a child that is abandoned due to the extreme poverty of their family

**ABANDONED ORPHANS:** a child, mostly infants that have been abandoned and left to die in dumpsters, bus stops, markets, and hospitals

**ORPHANS OF SOCIAL RISK:** a child who has been taken away from family due to abuse or neglect

Of the 170,000 reported orphans in Honduras a vast majority are not "true" orphans but in actuality have one or both parents living. They are social and poverty orphans, placed in orphanages because their parents are unequipped to care for them. And many of the children growing up in the orphanages we were assisting not only have family somewhere but actually have regular family visitation at the orphanage. While cultivating communities to host foster care, it is our plan also to begin putting the pieces together to see struggling families supported so that these poverty orphans can remain in their families. The same churches and communities that embrace our foster families can equip low-income families as well to keep their children, and we hope that our U.S. church partners too will see the quality of supporting these same orphans in their biological family as they previously supported them to live in an orphanage.

**"THE CHILD, FOR THE FULL AND HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT OF HIS OR HER PERSONALITY SHOULD GROW UP IN A FAMILY ENVIRONMENT."**

**THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**



**"POVERTY SHOULD NEVER BE THE ONLY JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REMOVAL OF A CHILD FROM PARENTAL CARE, RATHER A SIGNAL TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY."  
THE UN GUIDELINES ON ALTERNATIVE CARE**

Orphanages should never be our first choice for a child. All around the world, countries are striving for deinstitutionalization. This is ceasing the use of orphanages of any form, and instead cultivating communities, churches, and organizations to care for children in families (biological, foster, or adoptive). If you recall, the U.S. stopped using orphanages as the prime solution for vulnerable children right after WWII and turned to family-based care and small group homes; it is time for Honduras to do the same!

If you were no longer around and you could choose where your children went would your choice be an orphanage or a family? Easy enough to answer! God feels the same way about each of His children. While this is a long-term goal, the first steps are needed now to begin providing family-based care services so that the government welfare office has the option to place the majority of vulnerable children into family-based care, using residential care (orphanages) as an absolute last resort; or only when they specialize in certain care. i.e., teen mom home or drug abuse assistance for street boys. If we, as NGO's and ministries aren't providing family-based care programs and family strengthening programs, then the government will have to continue to only use institutions.

We strongly believe that as the body of Christ we must provide these services and to be the initiators of change, no matter where we reside or work.

We do not want to leave our expectations at the doorstep of the government. As Christians, we want to be the family to the orphan, knowing our efforts will bring about real change and impact.

That is why we also desire to encourage the believers that support missions and orphan care efforts in third-world countries to thoroughly research and understand what they are backing with their financial support, resources, and prayer. As unified body, we can direct our funds and efforts to best practices in orphan care.

**"SIXTY YEARS OF GLOBAL, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH SHOWS THAT LIVING IN ORPHANAGES CAN HARM A CHILD'S SOCIAL, PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HAS LONG-TERM IMPACTS ON THEIR ADULT LIFE. "  
UNICEF**

# WHO WE ARE

## **GOD SETS THE LONELY IN FAMILIES PSALM 68:6**

Our journey through orphan care in Honduras brought us to the realization that there is a need to provide better support for vulnerable children than we had been providing the first eight years of our ministry. It was a journey, coupled with gaining information from researchers that led us to completely change our model of care and our approach to ministry altogether. We recognized that instead of racing to meet all the needs before us, we needed to glean from others that already knew and successfully put to work best practices in orphan care; therefore, meeting the needs before us in a way that provided lasting results. The science and research behind those best practices only reinforced what years on the field had shown us. Children growing up in orphanages were almost always developmentally behind. This was largely because they were not receiving the individualized care a mom and dad naturally give to a child; their brain development had actually been damaged. (See [www.developingchild.harvard.edu](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu)).

Also, children form their identity and create a sense of belonging and purpose in the safe atmosphere of their family environment. Family structure can be fragile when difficulties and lack take hold; therein removing the foundation that children need to thrive and form their identity. When that family environment is never reinstated, then children in actuality don't form an identity or a sense of belonging. So despite receiving proper nutrition and outstanding educations, these young adults still enter society broken and destitute.

All of this research combined with God's truth found throughout scripture, and highlighted so well in Psalm 68:6, "God sets the lonely in families" is the foundation for why Identity Mission strives to connect these vulnerable children to solutions that will continue to surround the child with family care so that they can stay on track for proper development and in touch with a sense of self.

**OUR MISSION IS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE CHILDREN BY  
PROVIDING FAMILY-BASED CARE SOLUTIONS ALONGSIDE  
THE LOCAL CHURCH**

**OUR VISION IS TO SEE A NATION WHERE EVERY CHILD HAS THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR IDENTITY IN CHRIST WITHIN  
A LOVING FAMILY**

# WHAT WE DO

## FAMILY PRESERVATION

At-risk families are identified, and IM comes alongside the family to provide the support needed to prevent separation.

IM evaluates the family's situation and meets their immediate needs, preventing deep trauma to the child and family. Once the crisis is averted, IM then walks alongside the family to discover a means for sustainability for the family.

## KINSHIP CARE

Similar to family preservation, IM supports kinship care by walking with family members that have chosen to raise their nephews, nieces, grandchildren, or other biological family members, whether the need be construction projects, micro business support, education sponsorship, or other support to help a child grow up in their family and culture.

## FOSTER CARE

Until 2012, there were only a handful of foster families throughout Honduras, and mostly solely for children with special needs. As God has equipped us, we now have an operating foster family program in three regions of Honduras. Our foster families are supported by IM caseworkers, regular training, assistance with resources, a local church body, and family support events.

## ADOPTION

Adoption has been an underdeveloped part of Honduras' orphan care, internationally and domestically. While the government is working towards creating a process, we are encouraging Christian Hondurans to answer the call to adoption through awareness and understanding.

## RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

Care within a family is unequivocally ideal for children. Yet, we honor the devoted care provided by many quality residential facilities. We partner with them by hosting our annual Identify Solutions Conference for orphan care providers to equip them with training and resources. IM also provides a yearly retreat for youth growing up in orphanages to develop an understanding of their identity in Christ. We provide consultation for homes that desire to transform their care to reflect a more family-based care model.



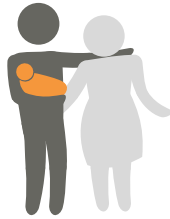
# HOW WE DO IT

## WHAT MAKES US DISTINCT



COMMITTED TO  
PARTNERING WITH  
THE LOCAL CHURCH  
IN ALL OF OUR  
ORPHAN CARE  
EFFORTS

**CHURCH PARTNERS**



DEDICATED TO  
PROVIDING FAMILY  
CARE FOR THE  
VULNERABLE CHILD

**FAMILY-BASED**



GUIDED BY THE  
GOSPEL MESSAGE OF  
GRACE IN ORDER TO  
SEEK EXCELLENCE IN  
ALL OUR ENDEAVORS

**CHRIST LED**

In all of our efforts, Identity Mission partners with the local Honduran churches that have the heart to help local children and families in crisis. We believe when the local body of Christ is working together to corporately love and care for a child that they will undoubtedly grow to understand and live up to the potential they have as a child of God. This beautiful partnership between the local church and orphan care also provides the church with an outlet to live up to their calling to care for orphans and widows; we cannot overestimate the impact that happens within a church and a community when they open their doors and lives to children in need. That is why each church that partners with Identity Mission takes ownership and sustains this work through time, prayer, and resources. Every Identity Mission partner church appoints coordinators to manage their work in any or all of the orphan care programs that Identity Mission offers partnership in; be in foster care, family preservation, or mentoring youth growing up in orphanages. We work together to also identify supporting community agencies, filling in the gaps for needed resources, to best create a community where vulnerable children can grow up with the support to reach their full potential.

Our local partner churches also collaborate with our partner churches from North America in projects, awareness, financial support, discipleship, and all aspects pertaining to our involvement in orphan care. It is our hope therefore that through the local church, Identity Mission empowers a partnership that will establish family-based care and orphan prevention that is grounded in faith and sustained by the church body.

# GET INVOLVED WITH US

## SERVE

Serving in a third-world country will impact you in a manner like no other, be it on a short-term trip or a long-term volunteer experience. See for yourself the impact Identity Mission is making for the vulnerable children and families of Honduras. You will be able to meet practical needs through work projects that will sustainably make an impact on children's futures. Whether you are interested in bringing a team to serve on a short-term trip or you are interested in taking a step to dive deeper into a long-term volunteer experience for yourself, contact us to receive your volunteer or mission team packet.

## ENGAGE YOUR COMMUNITY

One of the greatest ways you can be involved in orphan care is to raise awareness of the importance of family-based care and best practices for the vulnerable child. Host an Identity Mission representative at your local church to do just that, or host a fundraiser in your community to not only raise funds but distribute material and understanding about the orphan cause. Our team will equip you with all you need to raise awareness and make a difference today, as you chose to stand up and be a voice for the fatherless.

## PRAY

Action is often most powerful in our quiet time with our Jesus. He has the wisdom and power to transform nations, governments, and individual hearts. The most precious gift you can offer is your joint prayers on a regular basis, and we mean that! He has heard the orphan cry, and He is faithful to rescue them in their time of trouble. Together, let's pray that we are all equipped and empowered to be His hands and feet as needed, and let's stand in faith that He is constantly moving on behalf of His beloved children in miraculous ways.

## DONATE

Your donations to Identity Mission equip us to recruit, train and support foster families. It also gives us the means to reach vulnerable children before they even enter the system, through our Family Preservation Project that assists at-risk families in poverty. Give today knowing that you're not simply putting a band-aid on the orphan problem; you are leaving a legacy that will impact an entire country.

# STAY CONNECTED

IDENTITYMISSION.ORG  
TARAIMHIS.BLOGSPOT.COM

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