



# HONDURAS 2016

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LUMOS TRAVELER - Belmont Graduate May 2016



During my time at Belmont University, I took a myriad of courses which prepared me for a trip like this. Business 101 taught in Spanish, International Political Economy, International Entrepreneurship, History of Latin America and the Caribbean, Financial Management, you name it. Each class was good, resourceful, provided information that would apply directly to the work I would accomplish. Although I *knew* what I was getting into, I had no idea the heart change that would come from living in a place so starkly different from the world that was mine.

Honduras. Most people hear it and know its somewhere south of our country. Hot. Poor. Needy. All of these things are true, in a sense. But the depth of these conditions isn't so simple. While slightly larger than Tennessee in size, the roads are so bad, it can take over 10 hours to get from one side of the coast to the other, and that doesn't even count the time you'll spend waiting in line at military outposts as they search your vehicle for drugs. Things are rough, but not because the people want to live this way; the odds are so stacked against them, winning seems impossible.

Like many small Latin countries, corruption in government has created disparity, leaving a grand majority of the country living below the poverty line. Six of every ten households live in extreme poverty, that is less than \$2.50 per day. With a population just under 9 million, that means 5,400,000 people in poverty. That is the city of Chicago, doubled. That is the population of Nashville times 8.3 living on the cost of a cup of coffee each day.

While statistics may seem tiresome here, I share these to give the best picture I can, because I can't take you there with me to see these statistics as sweet faces standing in front you with empty plates, swollen bellies and bare, dirty feet. It's the best way I know how.

The average age for a mother to have her first born is 20, two years younger than me, and she'll likely birth 2 or 3 kids. Those kids have a school life expectancy of 11 years old if they are boys and 12 if they are girls. They may not even get to go to school, as 16% of kids ages 5-14 make up the work force. That's 280,809 children working in fields simply to survive. And that is a statistic Mission Lazarus is fighting to change, to work with the conditions rather than against them, in efforts to equip this generation for future change and sustainability.

The summer of 2016, I spent 4 months in Honduras with Mission Lazarus learning about the social issues, experiencing them day in and out, seeing these statistics personified in the students I worked with. I was initially interested in this trip and project because of my experience working with Mission Lazarus. I loved what they stood for as an organization and I was very interested in their work against cyclical poverty and for economic opportunity creation through social enterprise or business practices. With my academic field of Social Entrepreneurship, I was extremely interested in this practice applied in more remote areas, where opportunity was scarce.

Mission Lazarus has been present in Honduras since 2001 and does many different things well, including medical, spiritual, agricultural, and educational outreaches. As a part of their educational initiatives, they operate vocational schools to overcome the cultural barrier that

physical skills are more valuable than intellectual skill. Mission Lazarus has vocational schools in three disciplines: Leather, Carpentry and Sewing. Each initiative is a 3-year program where students receive academic training alongside vocational training. Students are ages 9-15, they are part of that 16% who make up the Honduran work force. In the rural area where Mission Lazarus is located, most kids cannot attend school because their families need extra income simply to survive. To overcome this financial barrier in access to education, Mission Lazarus provides the student and his/her family with a stipend; this way, students can earn and support their family while learning and furthering their future opportunity for employment. By the end of the program, students receive a certification in their discipline and finish 9<sup>th</sup> grade in school (this is three years more than the government provides, as free education is only accessible through 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Honduras). The vocational schools serve Mission Lazarus as a social enterprise. Products made by students in the program and program graduates are later sold as goods creating a revenue stream to fund the program and other aspects of the ministry.

In volunteering with them, and later interning for them throughout my senior year at Belmont, I began to learn the organization more intricately, spotting areas for improvement. From here, the project began to emerge. My purpose in Honduras was to see, learn and evaluate the functionality of the social enterprise initiative, which includes the vocational schools. This evaluation would prompt an action plan or strategy for the production including a production calendar, purchase order methods, secure material suppliers to create consistency, material inventory management, changes in record keeping and physical organization. This strategy would be implemented and a Honduran worker would be trained on the task to maintain new operations. This was my project in a nutshell.

Before I even left, I knew this task list was going to be a handful for a short four months. But my outlook was positive; I wanted to be as useful as possible to the organization, to learn all I could and help in every way I knew how. This frame of mind certainly helped me to flex to the needs around me in my time serving, as many jobs came my way that I did not expect.

Reflecting on my trip, I am very proud of the work I was able to accomplish for Mission Lazarus. In the first month, I asked a lot of questions. Through this information intake, I developed a strategic plan for production calendars and purchase ordering, my first deliverable. This online calendar allows the US based office to communicate Purchase Orders to the Honduras operations side. The PO specifies product design, materials with their identification number, costs, as well as the timeline- date requested, production date, shipping date, receiving in US date. Both US and Honduras positions must sign off on the PO indicating the agreement to the dates and criteria outlined, ensuring full communication. The order is then fulfilled by the full-time program graduates which Mission Lazarus employs to create work opportunity for young adults in Honduras. An example of a purchase order is attached to the end of this document.

The biggest task and second deliverable I provided for Mission Lazarus was a thorough cost analysis of the products made by students and program graduates of the leather vocational school. Mission Lazarus has a product line of roughly 20 products. Estimates of product costs had been made in the past, but had not been updated in the last 2 years or created for new products. I worked directly with the instructor Ernesto to calculate the materials used on each product type including square footage of leather and other materials like buckles, magnets, zippers, glue, etc. Once we figured out the units, I searched through records and receipts to find the unit costs of the items, later creating a spreadsheet to calculate the cost of the product. This spreadsheet can be used for future products, making simple adjustments as the price of leather and other materials change. Referred to as “formatos”, these spreadsheets are now used on a weekly basis to mark down inventory, calculate commission based payroll and maintain transparency in weekly production for the vocational school. An example of this spreadsheet is attached to the end of this document.

Additionally, these calculations became very helpful in calculating scrap materials. These numbers will help them better understand which costs to associate with scrap and which to attribute to the cost of learning materials down the road.

The third deliverable I presented to Mission Lazarus was the research and connections made with suppliers. For each material used in current or future production, I looked for Honduras or Central American suppliers. We toured a Leather Tannery in El Salvador, this was a huge personal achievement regarding international business transactions as the entire visit and business negotiation was conducted in Spanish! They created custom leather options for us which are planned for future use in 2017. Additionally, we secured a relationship with a middle man for metal parts like snaps, plastic linings and magnets. We developed a relationship with a Peleteria, which sells leather in bulk, for special orders or limited run leathers as they can provide a wide array of options but have a limit of footage. This “research, investigate and establish” part of my trip allowed for the most business focused learning experiences. With these established suppliers, the production side of operations can flow more smoothly and product consistency is achievable.

Overall, my project expectations were much bigger than my real ability. I worked almost every day from dawn through to dark, asked so many questions and learned a lot in the process. My deliverables were certainly worth the work! I was delighted to have opportunities for other tasks that I did not expect, like translating for American groups which came down to Mission Lazarus all through the summer, teaching English classes and providing tutoring sessions on the weekends to the kids living in the Mission Lazarus Refuge, and working the storefront at Tienda Lazaro.

Working the storefront at Tienda Lazaro became a time consuming task. In June, the computer which maintained all sales records and product inventory for the store in Honduras crashed. Unfortunately, this information was not stored in a cloud and there were no backup



files. When this happened, it became all-hands-on-deck to get the inventory system back up and running. It detoured me from my original tasks about 3 weeks. Nevertheless, recounting inventory and updating sales made was very important and beneficial to the ministry, allowing a reset to the store in the process! In August, the store manager left for maternity leave and I was asked to step in and conduct sales. This was a unique opportunity as well, allowing me more insight on business procedures in international territory. Although I didn't expect to be tasked these items, Mission Lazarus had a need and I wanted to be useful. The experiences provided through these detours were beneficial to my learning as an individual, teaching me to flex to the needs around me.

My heart did a lot of growing on this trip. Each day, I woke hungry with a task list a mile long. By the end of the day, maybe a fourth of my tasks were completed, some were still processing and other loomed ahead. About halfway through, this continued mindset was wearing on me. The Director of Operations, Jorge, and his wife, Bremelly, noticed this and talked with me about it. They had moved here January 2016 and began their work as full-time employees; they had felt very similarly, but took a new frame of mind. There are only so many hours in the day. And as Christians, we serve a God who knows how much work can be accomplished in that day before it even begins. "You can only do the best you can with what you have, and that is enough." These words really shaped the way I approached the last half of my project. It meant stopping for dinner or a phone call from home, even if the store inventory wasn't finished. It meant taking a hike up the mountain at sunset for a little soul-recharging, even if the financial breakdowns have not been finished after 8 hours of straight work. They will still be there tomorrow. As a chronic workaholic, these words have continued renewing my approach to work as I began my full-time job once returning home. If I give my best and do all I can, I have done my best and done all I can. And that is good. Now rest.

For future Lumos travelers, I would advise you to really listen. Other cultures, communities and people can share so much with you if you are willing to listen. Just like those words above shaped me, so did many experiences of saying yes when I was timid or uncomfortable. Because I said yes, I visited 7 different cities in 3 days. I learned how to live without wifi, electricity, and running water. I learned to be thankful for those things when they are actually available. I saw grand sunsets and felt strong winds because I said yes to an adventure even though I had to get up earlier and I had been working a long day before. I stood on the edge of a mountain looking over into Nicaragua because I said yes even though I was wearing a skirt and loafers from church that morning. Don't hold yourself back from interesting experiences and opportunities, and you can start living with that attitude right now, no matter where you are.

My other piece of advice for any collegian: get smart while you can, and always learn. The best way you can make a future impact is by becoming knowledge here and now. The more you know, the better suited you will be. There are many classes I wished I could have taken to better prepare me for this project, like Supply Chain Management. Even still, many classes I took

gave me the skills I needed to give my best work. If I hadn't been striving for a 4.0 GPA each semester, many of these skills would've been lost. So often, students are worn down from academic obligations and "skating" through classes becomes routine. But I encourage the opposite! Take classes that will be useful to you in the future and give it your best. Do not dismiss school as that "diploma you have to get" to have the job you want. After working with students who want to learn but don't have the resources, the money, nor the access to education, I see such value in our academic institutions here in the US which create opportunity for so many. Don't take it for granted.

Waiting to submit my final reflection and give my presentation has turned into a great blessing, as I have revisited fond memories from last summer preparing. I have continued relationships with those I met in Honduras and seen the project completed take roots. Now, I work for Mission Lazarus full time as the Social Enterprise Manager. While my work responsibilities now are focused on US operations, like marketing and sales, having the experiences from my trip to Honduras gives me a huge advantage each day. I can better complete my job and am better versed in the international transaction realm. I am extremely grateful for the financial support of the Lumos Foundation who helped make this possible! I highly encourage others interested in travel and service to apply for future projects. This experience challenged growth in my heart and helped me see the world differently, inspiring me to continue working with international companies that provide social and economic impact for developing nations.



1113 Harpeth Industrial Court  
Franklin, TN 37064  
1-615-250-0229

## PURCHASE ORDER/PEDIDO

TO:  
**Taller Vocacional**  
Misión Lázaro Honduras  
San Marcos de Colón  
Honduras, CA

SHIP TO:  
**Natalie Borrowman**  
Mission Lazarus USA  
1113 Harpeth Industrial Ct  
Franklin, TN 37064  
Natalie.b@missionlazarus.org

P.O. NUMBER:  
**#0021**

FECHA DE PEDIDO	FECHA DE HACER	FECHA DE ENTREGA	FECHA DE ENVIAR	FECHA DE LLEGAR USA
8/15/2016	1/9-21/9	8/9, 15/9, 22/9	20/10	5/11

CANTIDAD	PRODUCTO	DESCRIPCIÓN	EL COSTO	TOTAL
40 Matias	Matias	Cuero #2002 Chocolate	71.36	2854.40

SUBTOTAL	2854.40
TAX	
SHIPPING AND HANDLING	
OTHER	
TOTAL	<b>\$2854.40</b>

1. Llena el formulario con la información: fecha de hacer/enviar/llegar, el costo, estimación para el envío
2. Envía a Natalie para la firma y confirmación del pedido
3. Pone la información en el calendario. Comunica con el taller sobre el pedido y la fecha de hacer.
4. Envía sus preguntas a Natalie Borrowman

1113 Harpeth Industrial Court  
Franklin, TN 37064  
1-615-250-0229  
615-250-0229

\_\_\_\_\_  
Autorizado por Natalie Borrowman

15 de Agosto

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

Attachment 2.

The "Formatos" are used to calculate the costs of each product. Materials are listed individually to help mark down inventory of materials. The "bonificacion" is used to calculate commission based pay. "Desperdicios" calculates scrap material.

Persona:  
Fecha:

Destinacion:  
Tienda USA  
Tienda Lazaro  
Taller Vocacional

PRODUCTO ELABORADO:  
Alma (Aceite o Tinta)  
Cuero Chocolate #2002

Pedido:

CANTIDAD ELABORADA:							
Costo Total de Cuero Usado						\$	-
Materiales	Unidades	Costo/Unidad			Costo Unitario	Cantidad Elaborada	TOTAL COSTO
Cuero #2002	5.5	\$ 2.44			\$ 13.42		\$ -
Forro #1002	3	\$ 0.75			\$ 2.25		\$ -
Hebilla #3001	4	\$ 0.27			\$ 1.08		\$ -
P50 #4001	0.5	\$ 0.33			\$ 0.17		\$ -
Suela #2010	1.1	\$ 3.55			\$ 3.91		\$ -
Tinta #4004 #4005/Aceite #4006	125	\$ 0.01			\$ 1.25		\$ -
Hilo Mano #4011	20	\$ 0.01			\$ 0.20		\$ -
Hilo Machina #4008	2	\$ 0.01			\$ 0.02		\$ -
Pega #4012	0.25	\$ 1.39			\$ 0.35		\$ -
			Rate	Wage	Pago		
Bonificacion %		1.00	15	\$	15.00		\$ -
Bonificacion Ernesto Izaguirre		68.88	2.50%	\$	1.72		\$ -
Desperdicios		\$ 2.44	6	\$	14.64		\$ -
Costo del Programa		\$ 4.15	4	\$	16.60		\$ -
						Cantidad Elaborada	TOTAL COSTO
C O S T O				\$	70.60		\$ -

<----- este valor representa costo total del cuero usado, cuero util y cuero de desperdicio

<----Cuando este numero es menor que el numero de desperdicios es debido al producto y algunos productos producen mas desperdicios.

DISTRIBUCION DE BONIFICACION	CANTIDAD DE BOLSOS		PAGO	TOTAL BONIFICACION
Jose Luis Ordenez		\$	15.00	\$ -
Brayan Raymundo Lagos		\$	15.00	\$ -
Bryan Duarte		\$	15.00	\$ -
Luis Izaguirre		\$	15.00	\$ -
Tito Espinoza		\$	15.00	\$ -
Yordi Gonzales		\$	15.00	\$ -
Dolmo Izaguirre		\$	15.00	\$ -
TOTAL			\$	-



I took this photo the first day during lunch. This is the view from the restaurant, which doubled as my office when the internet was working. Dreamy! I found myself staring at the mountains more often than not!

These girls captured my heart the first week I was in Honduras. I translated for a US Missions team in a small rural town at the bottom of a mountain. It was 98 degrees, constant heat. And these girls were all smiles no matter what. They were fascinated by photos and wanted to see what they looked like. So many of them had never seen an image of themselves or a mirror. This picture is one of my favorites from the entire trip.



The view from where I stayed at Posada San Lazaro on a rainy Sunday morning.





This is a day that I will never forget. I translated for a few Americans at a medical clinic two hours drive from ML. the roads were nauseatingly awful, but there were people who lived that remotely and they needed medical care. We walked 30 minutes through the mountains to Maria's house so the doctor could see her ulcer and treat it. It was over 100 degrees and this woman lived alone. She was so grateful for our visit and treatment.

This is Maria's house. Built of sticks. I was fortunate to visit her one more time before I left and hope to see Maria again. Such a kind woman. Although she does not have much physically, she is abundantly joy-filled.



The Medical Team here. Left to Right: Nelcy (the doctor) MZ (fundraising team for ML), Me, Griselda (pharmacist) and Patricia (head nurse).

I grew especially close to the two on the left side, both came to my wedding in December!!





I attended a field trip with the boys from our leather vocational school. They raised funds by pooling portions of the stipends together. These funds went to purchase food for two elderly women in the community, being that these women lived alone and lacked support, too elderly to work. I went with them to deliver the foods. The sweet woman here cried and was deeply touched. The boys prayed for her. Very special moment to witness.

Bayardo, one of the security guards, helped me set up a soft light box. We used the sun to help us create professional photos of products in the Tienda Lazaro, so the store could begin online sales to other Hondurans in more developed areas of the country.



Trying my hand at leather pulling, a technique used to thin leathers, making it easier to hand stitch multiple pieces of leather together in a product. Ernesto, in the gray shirt, is the leather school instructor. He taught me so much this summer!!



My then boyfriend, now husband, flew down to Honduras to surprise me and propose! They staff was in on it and coordinated the whole thing, such an amazing memory!! I was able to share ML with Kyle during his week long stay and even rope him into helping me with a few projects!



Sweet girls at a school in the mountains in Las Pitas. This school building consisted of two classrooms and a latrine, or out house. 65 students went to school there, but inconsistently. I spoke with their teacher for 5 minutes or so. Her job is the hardest, providing an education for young kids who lack opportunity with very minimal resources. The 35 kids in one room range in ages from 5-11 and share 4 textbooks.





I witnessed 6 baptisms while in Honduras! It was a grand gift, made me cry each time. This one took place in the large sink behind someone's house in Cedeno, a small sea and fishing town.

This was the supply closet at the vocational school. I almost pulled my hair out and/or cried. It was so messy! I helped to reorganize and inventory the materials they had on hand and develop a better system for managing incoming materials. Hopefully the closet never looks like this again!!



I worked with the women's vocational school for sewing as well, in the mountains of La Bojita. SUCH a special place. 25 girls are in this program, and this photo showcases the seminar I led on freedom to dream. Many of these girls come from abusive situations. In the mountains, there aren't schools, there isn't opportunity for work. Most women are raised by abusers physically and sexually, told they are only good to make tortillas and babies. We are trying to break through this cultural barrier by providing academic education and job training, so these girls have opportunity to become whatever they can dream!





My parents and younger sister came to visit me while I was working in Honduras. During their trip, I put them to work!! We cooked lunch for the school in Las Pitas one Friday, providing eggs, ham, and veggies (much tastier than the rice milk they are used to). It took a while because we only had one pan and stove, but they were a great team!! Such a treat to show them this country.

The beautiful coffee farm in La Bojita, Finca San Lazaro. The woman here is the farm manager, Norma. She is the first woman manager in the region. We are setting trends and changing things up!!



Ignacio, lovingly called Tio Nacho. He drove me almost everywhere I needed to go. Such a loving man, giant teddy bear, and hilarious! He is the Director of Security in Honduras and monitors the safety of our facilities, overseeing the 24-hour guards and surveillance team.





The Kitchen Staff at La Posada San Lazaro. I cooked alongside them and cleaned the dishes when they would let me. The majority of the time, these women were sweating in the kitchen, prepping food for me and others. Amazing hearts and stories. I really enjoyed slow weekends when I could spend one on one time with these women, learning about their families and histories.

Because they cooked so much for me, it became tradition on Sunday for me to cook pancakes for the kitchen staff and guard on duty. Sometimes they had bananas in them, if we were lucky—chocolate!!



When the products are finished, the trucks pull up to the workshop and we load all the bags into the truck. The truck drives them the 2 miles to the store, where an inventory count is taken, they are boxed and later shipped to the US for customer purchase. Each bag is handmade by one individual!





Such a fun (and hot) day! We explored San Marcos with some products for a photoshoot, capturing marketing content. Amazing backdrops, mountain views and beautiful leather bags!!

I liked to make the students laugh by doing goofy “American” things, like saying English words, smiling really big, joking around brought great smiles to their faces!



Three of my favorites: Henry, Brian, Ernesto.