

# Un Mundo

Dignity Community Self Sufficiency



Dear Friends of Un Mundo,

After 15 months I recently returned to Honduras, to find the trees noticeably bigger, the children surprisingly taller, and remarkable improvements in the communities where we work. Not only are there beautiful murals, rebuilt schools, and a spacious Un Mundo headquarters, there is also more enthusiasm, greater volunteerism, and a general sense of empowerment.

Thank you all so much for making possible these wonderful changes. As always your support is much appreciated. It is still very much needed, especially with all our plans for the coming year. Read more at [www.unmundo.org](http://www.unmundo.org).

Kenneth Joseph Hutz,  
Un Mundo Executive Director

## A New Roof for the Las Mangas School

*El Progreso* is a tree-shaded school in Las Mangas, a village about a mile downstream from El Pital. It's a cheery place, with walls painted salmon pink inside and out and a jostling line of huge flaming red flowers in front of its stoop. But best of all, the school has a bright new metal roof, thanks to the generous help of the *Minke Stichting* (Minke Foundation).

The *Minke* foundation works closely with Un Mundo on education projects in the Cangrejal River Valley (*La Cuenca*). The organization honors Minke Zijlstra, a young Dutch woman who died unexpectedly in December 2002, only a few weeks after she and fiancé Allard Froom stopped at El Pital. They fell in love with the place, and Minke even taught a class in the El Pital school. Froom started *Minke Stichting* to commemorate and carry on her passion for educating children.

The first *Minke* project was a school bus for the high school in El Pital. Then last fall *Minke* and Un Mundo helped the people of El Pital to construct buildings for a new classroom, a computer lab, and a kitchen for the elementary school.

With the roof at *El Progreso* on its last legs, parents put up old utility poles between the desks to hold up the roof until classes



ended in November. Froom learned of the roof from former Un Mundo facilitator Kate Venner, and soon *Minke* raised \$1,500 for the project. Parents and teachers of Las Mangas had already raised nearly \$2,000 from other Honduran and international organizations, and with the *Minke* contribution, the group ordered building supplies and got right to tearing that old roof down the moment the kids left for vacation.

Because Un Mundo believes that the community should be invested in a project, teachers Ermelito Rivera and Ernesto Menjivar and contractor Julio Ancheta spearheaded a plan so each man over 18 would volunteer four days' work on the project, or pay someone to take his place. Outside of a few skilled technicians, all the work was done by the fathers, brothers, uncles, and neighbors of the school children, all on the rare sunny days in January, and all for no pay. (A number of under-18 boys were sweating in the schoolyard too, rust-proofing the metal cross beams, happy to pitch in.)



## Trash Collection Starts in El Pital

It's official: El Pital now has trash collection service and ten brightly painted trash cans on the main drag for folks to use.

Un Mundo facilitator Dan Keane, taking advantage of the can-do spirit during election season, brought together officials of government and private organizations, who on Tuesday, 22 February, scheduled the first collection for that Friday.



In less than three days, Keane and members of the community obtained trash barrels, and students in the Mural Campesino art classes of Un Mundo facilitator Kendra Curry painted them and made signs promoting their use.

## Art Classes Prepare for Two Murals

Dan Keane and Kendra Curry arrived in El Pital in December 2004 to act as Un Mundo onsite facilitators. Following is a summary of Dan's report about a ten-week Mural Campesino course covering art and environmental basics. You can read Dan's blogs at [www.unmundo.org](http://www.unmundo.org).

### Surveying for a quilt

In early February we took the youngest kids for a "nature walk," which is really just a way of saying that this time, you're actually going to look at the world you're walking through. We catalogued the complete *medio ambiente* of El Pital: not only the river, the clouds, and the mango trees, but also the horse poop, power lines, and discarded chip bags.

Back in the classroom, the kids drew items from the list on squares of white poster board. Jose quickly sketched the *zancudo* (a leggy uber-mosquito) as a blood-red zeppelin, while the slashing lines and starred barbs of Karina's *alambre* (wire fence) recalled the more minimalist moods of pop-art. The kids then stitched the squares together to create a giant quilt representing the entire El Pital environment.



### Bighorn sheep and the brown crayon

The fifth and sixth graders are exploring other environments around the world. Yes, it can be tricky to explain Antarctica to a bunch of tropical kids with only paper, crayons, and our work-in-progress Spanish. But with a stack of well-worn National Geographic magazines and some inspired ad-libbing ("Who saw Titanic? Now that was an iceberg!"), they caught on. They split into groups and worked out large portraits of the arctic, the desert, and the high mountains (not the green Honduran variety, but Wyoming types with snow on top.)

We had puffins, leaping white caribou, sand dunes. We had Beto's handsome perspectives of a rocky fjord. But the desert! No matter what the photos in the magazines showed, Yeimi, Araceli, and Tanya marked their desert's horizon with the familiar green hills of the *Cuenca*. ("The color of nature," one of our older students observed.) Only through heavy persuasion and color-test matches with the photos could Kendra convince the girls to switch to the brown crayon. In the end, they did, though with the complaint that all that brown was just *feo* (ugly).

### Shedding preconceived notions

Each *colegio* class (roughly grades 7-10) starts with a blind

This newsletter can only give a short summary of Un Mundo news. For much, much more about the programs and projects of Un Mundo and the people who make them happen, visit our exciting new URL at <http://www.unmundo.org>.

contour drawing: students sketch the outline of a common object without looking at their paper. This simple exercise demands that students shed any preconceived notions about what things are supposed to look like and think instead about the relationship between their eye, their hand, and the object. It's tricky, but with practice the jumble of lines on the page begins to assume the shape of the chair, the glue bottle, or the flower.

To prepare for the mural, many class projects focus making art collectively. In the *colegio* classes, teams of kids made pictographic maps of El Pital. Each team's thoughtful painting laid out the town's twin

lifelines of road and river in a slightly different configuration, lined by trees or light poles and crossed by winding footpaths.

*Mural Campesino art classes are funded by a grant from New England Biolabs Foundation, obtained by facilitator Kate Vener. The Mural Campesino program of murals and art education was established by Un Mundo volunteer Rachel McIntire.*



## Help Support the Work of Un Mundo

Un Mundo depends on support from friends like you to continue our work in marginalized communities. You can donate quickly and easily online through a secure server at [www.unmundo.org](http://www.unmundo.org). Or send a check to our U.S. address.

You can also volunteer or make an in-kind donation. We need help translating documents, writing grant proposals, fund-raising, and working on specific projects. We accept material donations of light trucks, generator, art supplies, laptops, and books in Spanish. Contact us at [info@unmundo.org](mailto:info@unmundo.org).

## Film Festival Brings Cinema to Rural Areas

In spite of automobile breakdowns, shortage of funds, bad weather, and primitive conditions, Un Mundo volunteer Ron Reinds continues to bring movies – and to introduce Un Mundo – to remote villages in Honduras.

Reinds' reports that in most cases the festival has been received enthusiastically, and that he has identified at least three sites for future Un Mundo work. Festival communities are chosen in conjunction with other local organizations already in the area, such as the municipality, the local governing councils, the Peace Corps, and other non-profit organizations.