

DOS CORRIENTES JOURNAL

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Dos Corrientes: Tracing its Roots from the Past to the Present

Numerous newcomers to Dos Corrientes often inquire about the origins and historical background of the organization. With kind permission from “The Gull Rock Gazette”, we present this article published this month and originally composed for the readership of Kilcoo alumni and Amici members. It sheds light on our journey from inception to present day.

The story of Dos Corrientes is one of dedication, ignited by the indomitable spirit of John Latimer and the enduring impact of Kilcoo Camp. It embodies a shared vision that gave birth to Amici and represents the convergence of two individuals who believe in a world where equality can thrive and change can be achieved.

Nestled along the Pacific coast of Ecuador, amidst semi-arid landscapes and sprawling wilderness, lies the remote village of Liguiqui. Here, the fundamental necessities of life, such as nourishing food and clean water, are luxuries. Sufficient education and employment are often unattainable. In this place, the dream of a better future seems as distant as the horizon, shadowed by the spectre of crime.

Liguiqui mirrors countless places globally where the average monthly income is meager. The average income is between \$125 and \$150 per month and 25% of the villagers make do with even less. The notion of escaping to a world like ours is a daydream. There is nothing to airlift them to the safety and opportunities that exist for us in Canada. Thousands of Ecuadorians undertake perilous journeys north, seeking illegal entry into the United States, with untold numbers losing their lives in the process.

Kilcoo Spirit in Ecuador



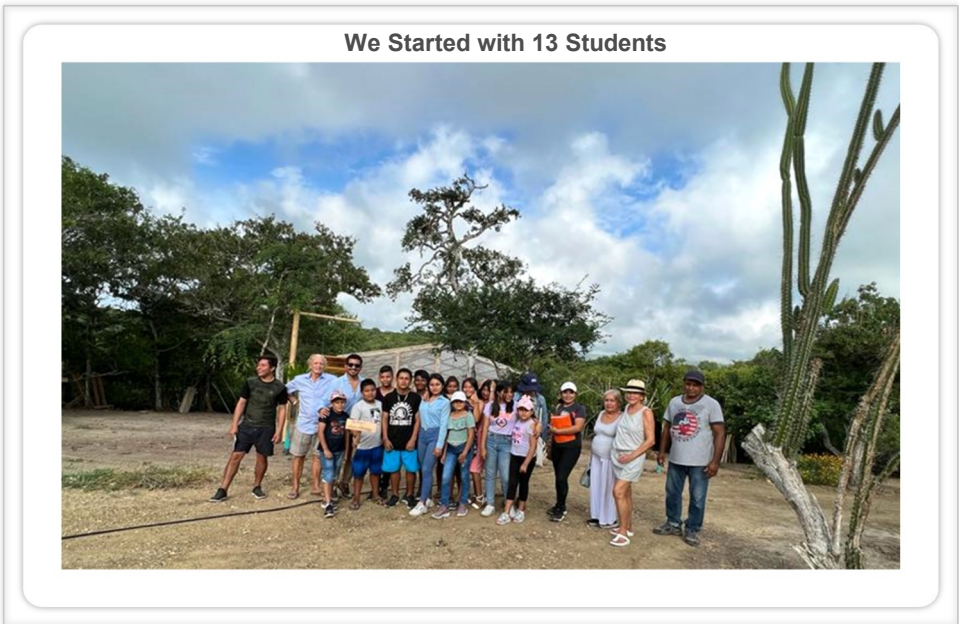
Liguiqui presented the ideal canvas for my wife, Heather Rose, and me to embark on a mission to create a blueprint that can be duplicated elsewhere and capable of alleviating poverty and strengthening communities. Our vision knows no borders or boundaries; it is a model designed to empower individuals to foster positive

change. In many ways, Dos Corrientes is the story of how a group of individuals, many with Kilcoo backgrounds, were propelled by compassion and determination to illuminate a path toward a brighter future. We stand at the outset of an extraordinary community transformation, driven by the cultivation of values and the enduring influence of Kilcoo in the heart of Ecuador.

After visiting Ecuador several times, in 2007 Heather and I purchased a piece of land overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Our initial thought was to develop the land as a sanctuary and health facility. But yearly visits brought us into contact with Liguiqui’s residents and other coastal communities, revealing the profound impact of poverty on individuals and their villages. In the early days, we dedicated ourselves to extensive research. This led to a huge breakthrough in our understanding of poverty and how it is defined by people who feel they are up against it. For people in the north, we tend to think of poverty as the lack of material things such as healthcare, food, water, clothes, and inadequate housing to name a few. In impoverished countries however, their feeling is not so much a lack of possessions but a sense of inferiority, despair, helplessness and that the system is set up against them. They have no voice.

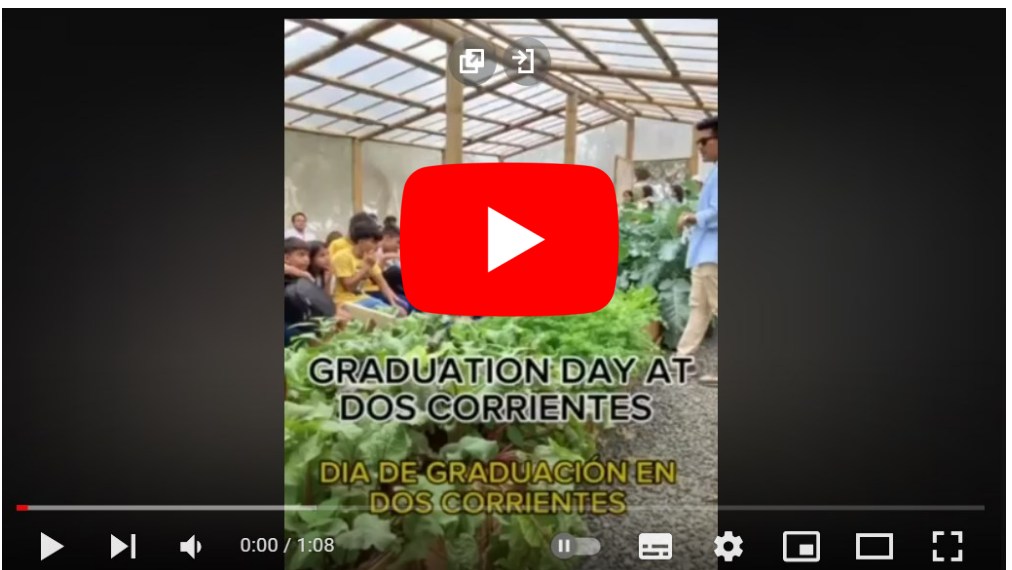
We discovered if we could create a circumstance whereby on their own and with outside guidance, individuals could enhance their formal education and with skill-based training, they would be very capable of overcoming the obstacles presented by the lack of employment, education and food. The villagers, especially the young, could have dreams about their lives and communities could be transformed. As a result, Dos Corrientes utilizes a multidimensional education platform and the traction has been exceptional. Our progress has exceeded our expectations as class size has tripled over the past year.

We are still in the early days, however Dos Corrientes is now addressing critical challenges in a number of communities in coastal Ecuador. Our programs encompass sustainable agriculture and food security where we teach local residents organic farming techniques and promote and teach the cultivation of nutritious crops. Entrepreneurial business is initiated through training and mentorship and English is a foundational aspect of the education process. Because less than 50% of children finish high school and have no means to access education beyond that, Dos Corrientes is inspiring young adults to value and complete their secondary school education and are helping students access post secondary education at a university 40 km away. These



programs provide the basic criteria for a brighter future for Ecuadorian children and communities.

When we looked into the eyes over 30 children receiving their certificates at the September semester graduation, we saw the same joy and spark that was felt by all of us at camp. That moment of recognition acknowledges that their dreams, like ours as young people, are important.



Currently at Dos Corrientes

The future at the Dos Corrientes Education Center is undeniably promising. Currently, our business instructor, Marcos Chiluisa, is collaborating with three students who are in the process of incubating their own businesses.

The first student in this endeavor is Antoni Reyes, a recent high school graduate residing in the nearby village of San Lorenzo. Antoni aspires to enroll in a computer science program at the nearest university to Dos Corrientes, the Universidad Laica Eloy Alfaro de Manibi (ULEAM). Post-graduation, Antoni envisions launching a business specializing in the repair of computers and cell phones. For many young individuals in this region, pursuing higher education presents a significant challenge due to financial constraints that include bus fares, textbooks, clothing, and technology expenses. This is where Dos Corrientes plays a crucial role, not by offering financial assistance, but by empowering students like Antoni to earn these resources on their own. The result is not only tangible skills but also increased self-esteem, confidence, and the satisfaction of becoming a role model for others.

Under the guidance of Marcos, Antoni is currently acquiring the skills needed to develop websites and create engaging social media content. His target market will be Expats, and this initiative exemplifies the spirit of self-reliance and determination that Dos Corrientes instills in its students. Through the income Antoni generates from his budding enterprise, he'll be able to pay for his university expenses. Moreover, the fundamental skills he is learning will pave the way for more significant entrepreneurial endeavors in the future.

Taking Inventory



Our second student, Maria Reyes (no relation to Antoni), has been featured in our previous writings. Through Maria's unwavering dedication and hard work, along with the support she's received from Dos Corrientes, Maria achieved certification as a nurse. Presently, with the guidance of Marcos Chiluisa, Maria is in the early stages of nurturing a small nursing business. Simultaneously, thanks to a generous donation of new clothing to Dos Corrientes' business incubation program, Maria is actively immersing herself in the world of retail clothing. Her ultimate goal is to gain comprehensive knowledge in all aspects of the industry and eventually embark on clothing manufacturing. Maria Del

Carmen Ortiz, a longtime expert in the clothing business from Manta, is providing additional mentoring to Maria.

Our third student, Ramiro Pincay, at 18 years of age, is a husband and father to a three-year-old son. He shares a modest bamboo house with his wife, parents, siblings, and grandparents. Ramiro is a bright young man with a strong work ethic. He has successfully completed high school and aspires to become an industrial engineer, earning his degree from ULEAM. Currently, Ramiro is employed at the Dos Corrientes farm, where he is involved in land clearing for agriculture, irrigation system construction, and various farming tasks. He is actively expanding the gardens, preparing them for planting, and sowing seeds and seedlings.

From the crops he cultivates, Ramiro plans to launch an online organic vegetable and fruit business, targeting Expats as his customer base. Antoni will assist with the technical aspects of this venture, and his compensation will come from the revenues generated by Ramiro. The income generated from Ramiro's agricultural business will not only support his family but also contribute to his university funds. Dos Corrientes is actively participating by funding the necessary infrastructure and materials for agriculture.

The future appears promising for these determined individuals, each embarking on unique paths with the support and guidance of Dos Corrientes.

Looking Ahead to 2024 and Beyond

As we approach the end of this year, we are eager to share the exciting developments that lie ahead for Dos Corrientes. Over the next 10 weeks, both our dedicated teaching staff and students will take a well-deserved break, allowing us to focus on essential repairs and the installation of new infrastructure.

Drilling the Smurfit Kappa



A notable highlight in the coming weeks will be the completion of a well generously donated by the Smurfit Kappa Foundation in Ireland. Digging this well has proven to be a challenging endeavor. Electronic scanning confirmed the presence of water on our farm, but unexpected rocky obstacles complicated the process. Drilling machines were damaged, casings got stuck, and part of the newly drilled well even collapsed while attempting to free the stuck casings. However, after months of perseverance, we've made early detections of salt-free water. Soon, the well will be fully operational, powered by a submersible solar pump, and the water will be transported through a tubing system to our agriculture area, just in time for the 2024 school season.

In 2024, our focus will shift towards English language education. A team of four professional instructors, known for making language learning an enjoyable experience, will make weekly visits to our education center.

The Growth of Dos Corrientes

In the coming year, Dos Corrientes plans to expand its educational program to reach young people from beyond the village of Liguíqui. Students will come from neighboring towns, including San Lorenzo, Pacoache, El Aromo, and Santa Rosa. This expansion is an ambitious undertaking, and we are working to address issues such as transportation to ensure accessibility. Our growth will extend beyond our traditional base, and with proper planning and funding, new centers may emerge in the Province of Manabí and beyond.



Stay Tuned for Exciting Developments

A unique and innovative aspect of Dos Corrientes is the creation of an "economic engine," a corporate entity designed to generate future revenues for our nonprofit while providing employment opportunities for local residents. Our founders acquired 50 acres of land, situated in an elevated location with breathtaking ocean views. We plan to sell three 12-acre lots with stunning views, with houses built and maintained by local workers. Owners will enjoy whale-watching from their balconies, the warmth of the Ecuadorian sky, energy from an off-grid system, and the chance to spend part of their year in one of the world's most diverse countries. If successful, we aim to seek partners to purchase additional land and replicate this community development, creating more employment opportunities for Ecuadorians.



New Website

We'd like to extend our thanks to our friend from Ecuador, David Bowen. Our paths first crossed while David was a student at ESPOL. Recently, he graduated with a degree in engineering and is now a valued member of Street Diligence, contributing significantly to the Data Analysis team. David continues to be a champion of Dos Corrientes, and he graciously designed a brand new website for us. We're confident you'll be delighted with it, as it's packed with enchanting photos and engaging videos.



Support Our Vision

In light of recent global developments, our shared mission takes on greater significance. Poverty, inequality, limited access to education, and job opportunities are pressing challenges that demand our attention and collaborative efforts. Our vision at Dos Corrientes encompasses all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, aiming to create a model that can combat poverty and transform communities worldwide through agriculture, business education, English education, and a self-financing economic engine.

In our interconnected world, no single entity can address these multifaceted issues alone. Substantial progress is achieved through collaborative partnerships that create a ripple effect of positive change. We urgently request support from all sectors. Please consider making a donation to Dos Corrientes, either through the provided link or corporate donations on our website. The University of the Fraser Valley will provide tax receipts, and corporate donations are fully deductible.

We extend our heartfelt thanks in advance for your support of the South America Growth Project Foundation, operating as Dos Corrientes. Together, we can make a meaningful impact on the world's most pressing challenges.

