

## 2021 Report Context

Our academic year was caught between the beginning stages of COVID-19 vaccinations (started mid year) and the educational community's desire for normalcy. Schools had hybrid learning models, slowly inching towards increased in-person teaching hours. Many students, for various reasons, had withdrawn from their studies during virtual learning and there was an urgency nationwide to recover these students' education before they dropped out officially. Still the high presence of COVID-19 and continued deaths in the region limited activities this year. [Visit our Shoulder to Shoulder website to view all news coverage of our activities in 2021.](#)

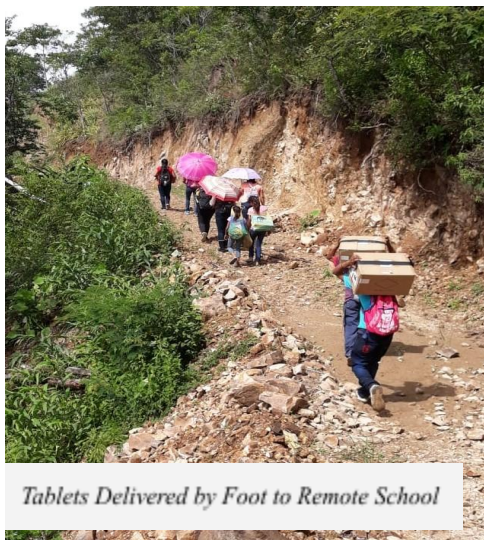
### **Kolibri**

This year we secured, for a second year, a U.S. Embassy grant to deploy 100 tablets in our region to support hybrid learning. With an already difficult year to navigate, our strategy targeted professors comfortable with Kolibri to avoid adoption resistance. A group, including our STAR teachers, was chosen and we also supported students preparing for the math olympics. As a background, because schools do not have enough textbooks per student, professors were stuck making endless copies of lessons and reading materials for every unit that they distributed physically to students. Teachers shared that grant tablets helped provide all textbook materials to students falling behind and those living in non-connectivity communities. Participant teachers were very happy to save on printing costs. [Read a teacher's experience here.](#)

### **Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) Pilot**

The biggest project we had this year was preparing and deploying equipment for a pilot study, in Northern Intibuca, studying if Kolibri makes an impact on students' academic performance. We worked closely with the Intibuca Department of Education and the IADB to help make this project a success. Our newest version of the CREE Kolibri channel included interactive content and a Spanish library with over 1,000 titles

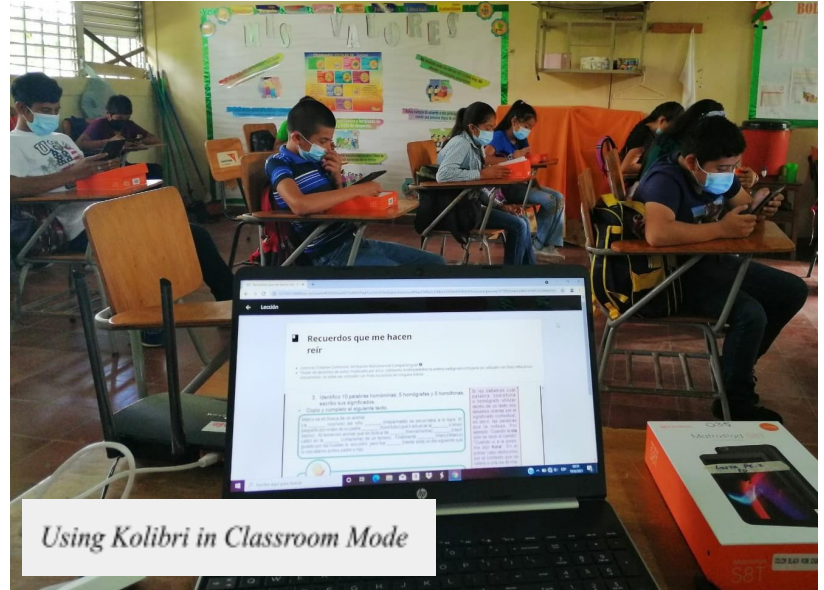
In total we deployed almost 3,500 tablets and 150 servers and routers to over 50 schools! Our team personally delivered equipment, which consisted of long, tiring and rewarding trips to all of the schools. With no prior knowledge of northern Intibuca communities, it was quite an experience. We also did a second trip to update the CREE channel and resolve any difficulties before the end of the school year. Due to problems in retrieving usage data virtually, we collected all equipment at the end of the year to manually extract it and resolve remaining technical issues.



Each community was asked to fundraise for a TV to complete the donated classroom tablet set and to begin creating a fund for equipment replacement. We stressed the importance of creating a sustainable program in each school as our support would be limited and some communities were not used to hearing this. Needing to work quickly with each new community was challenging. There were struggles at every step from distributing, training, parent consent, technology use, etc. Our team truly received a challenge and we are excited to learn the results of the pilot study next year.



*Teacher Helps Student with Tablet*



*Using Kolibri in Classroom Mode*

### **Reading program**

This year we took a hybrid approach. Two different schools participated in the program with students from grades 6-8th , including our bilingual cohorts. CREE team members, Nelly and Jessy led our bilingual students in bi-weekly meetings to discuss readings. Students were surprised to interact with literature through fun activities and without realizing it they finished three books (two in English and one in Spanish). Summary videos and reading reports were turned in to evaluate comprehension. All students received participation diplomas and prizes were awarded to the top three readers. For more details, see our [reading program blog](#)

### **STEM Regional Center**

With excitement we inaugurated the awaited Regional STEM center during Dr.Dick's March visit. Local education authorities and staff were in attendance. This will be the headquarters for robotics and future STEM programming. We also announced 7 grants to update all high school science labs. The U.S. Embassy was not able to join us in person, but sent congratulatory remarks. Read [our inauguration blog here](#).

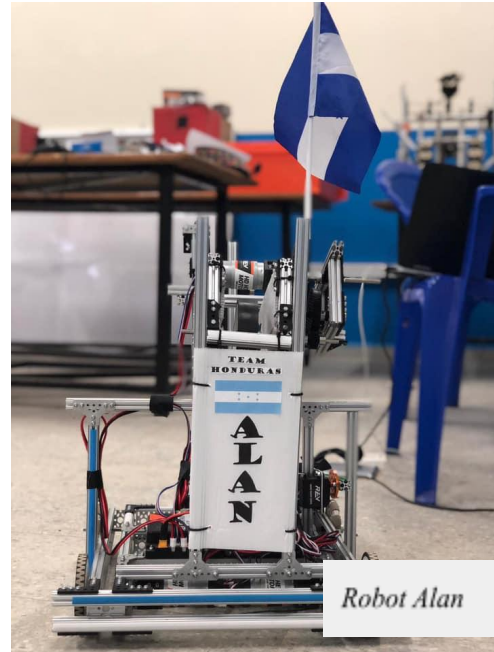
### **LEGO Robotics**

Many LEGO trainers reported being overwhelmed with the challenges of remote learning and pressure to retain or recover student dropouts. Team kits were stuck inside of high schools which were used by health authorities for COVID-19 triage centers. We hope that next year our robotics teams resume normal activities.



## FIRST Global Robotics

For a second year, we participated in a virtual FIRST Global competition. Our CREE team leaders were Minsis and Jessy. We tried something different and invited students from a third municipality - San Antonio. Our Robotics Mentor, Alan, came to train team members before the start of the competition. We took a hybrid approach for meetings, once a month in person and the rest virtually. The newly equipped STEM Center was the hub for the team to complete the four challenges given. Students had the opportunity to use power tools and even a 3D printer during the competition and with great effort the team placed #23 worldwide!! [Read our blog about the competition here.](#)



## VEX Robotics

Seeking a more sustainable robotics program to expand regionally and with the guidance of our Robotics Mentor, Alan, we decided to start VEX. For this first year Camasca professor, Henglyns, was hired part-time as a robotics coordinator. He recruited alumni from FIRSTGlobal interested in continuing to learn. Professor Alan came down to train our coordinator and 5 team members. They continued meeting bi-weekly to explore VEX. Additionally the team's knowledge was challenged in training the start of a second team in San Antonio. Our first year had a great start and we hope to continue expanding. [Read Henglyn's blog report on VEX.](#)

