

An update on the farm

May 18, 2026

From Denise Vargas, Executive Director

If you've ever traveled to Honduras as part of a trip to El Hogar, you have likely visited the farm and experienced the sudden hush that overcomes the mountains as you step onto the property in Talanga. Perhaps Yony or a member of his staff welcomed you with that similar warmth and pace that opposes a buzzing city. Whether you arrived when Talanga was a school or a farm, I hope you experienced the undeniable magic.

Five years ago, I also set foot on the farm property accompanied by long-time supporters of El Hogar and understood that as Executive Director, an important part of my work would be establishing a clear vision for El Hogar that incorporated the needs of the students we serve and the voices of the Honduran staff to ensure the sustainability of the organization.

For several years, I have been holding deep conversations with students, their family members and our staff, as well as experts in many areas, including agriculture, business and infrastructure. I have also held with care the dreams and vision of previous Executive Directors, board members and donors. I've listened to the evolving wisdom of youth service providers and experts worldwide and the practical stories that our numbers tell. In this role, I understand that being a good listener makes me a more decisive, courageous decision-maker, and that deciding what to do is as important as what not to do.

After much analysis, we decided to lease the farm property to a solid, responsible Honduran agricultural company last year, and cease all operations at the farm directly managed by El Hogar. This has significantly reduced our costs of operation, added value to the land allowed us to focus more of our resources to the current educational programs in Tegucigalpa and Amarateca. Managing two campuses safely and efficiently was challenging enough, managing a farm was requiring logistical, financial and management resources that could serve us better if focused on the current programs, for many reasons, some of which I detail below.

We aim to deepen our partnership with our students' communities by moving beyond a model of direct service alone and working alongside students, families, and neighbors so that each plays an active role in their education, strengthened by proximity to their neighborhoods. We are committed to continuity from first through twelfth grade, recognizing that steady enrollment and strong transitions from our elementary campus to our high school campus in Amarateca significantly increase long term impact. At the same time, we strive for greater clarity of mission, excellence, and efficiency, focusing our limited resources on the programs we can run well while collaborating with local organizations to address additional needs, and building on the important shift toward stronger Honduran leadership so that decisions remain rooted in the daily realities of the communities we serve.

I want to take the time to thank the many dreamers and doers that have kept El Hogar alive and evolving for over 45 years, but especially today, my gratitude leans toward those who invested

in the Talanga purchase, its development into an agricultural program, then a farm, as well as those involved in the many vision exercises, architectural designs and challenging questions.

We are deeply grateful to Yony Aguilera and his team, who for years carried the daily care of our students, land, and animals with remarkable dedication, steady patience, and a generous spirit of collaboration. Their faithful stewardship shaped not only the property itself but the foundation on which our work continues to stand. The land they tended remains a lasting gift, providing valuable resources to sustain El Hogar's mission and growing in value as a symbol of the hopes and possibilities they helped cultivate for the future.

As we work on our next strategic plan and prepare for our 50th anniversary, we will continue to analyze what role this property plays in El Hogar's future. Your legacy continues.