August 23, 2024

Dear Friends of Kiptik,

On behalf of the Concern America team in Chiapas, we send you warm greetings from the Education Commission.

We want to thank you for your support and your concern with the situation we are experiencing in Mexico, in Chiapas, and in the communities. As you already know, we are living in difficult times filled with crime: our state is overrun by cartels and criminal groups, and we no longer even know who they are, but they make life here more difficult.

Many of the access points to the communities are controlled by armed men, and free movement ended some time ago. Every time people enter or leave the communities, they are in danger. In some areas, they respect the community members more than in others, but even so, it's always necessary to proceed with caution.

This makes it more difficult to attend meetings, events, etc., outside the community. It also makes it harder to leave the municipality, to go shopping, or to sell products. And above all, it makes it more difficult to continue with education, but they are still there, and they are not going to give up.

The community schools continue, as always, some better than others, but they continue, and it is everyone's intention to keep growing and improving them. The work in secondary schools is a bit more complicated due to the distance, as students have to walk for hours to get there, or they have to stay as boarders during the week. And in these times of hitmen and violence, we have to look out for the young people and prioritize their safety. But we continue to find ways to move forward.

And when things get tough and plans don’t work out, we have to find a way, and that’s what we all do together.

That’s why we are working towards setting up a communication network through the internet so we can continue monitoring the schools and be able to get the materials to all of them that we keep creating every day.

For this, we have been using satellite internet for a few years, and now, with the support of Kiptik to install solar panels, even when the power is cut off, we now have communication and the computer functioning so we can keep working and reaching everywhere.

We still have a long way to go. There are areas where the internet hasn't yet reached, but little by little, the idea is to create a network with repeaters so that communication can reach more and more communities.

We send you our greetings and thank you again for staying aware of and supporting what is taking place in Chiapas.

In solidarity,

Alicia Arnandis and Ilhui Mancilla

San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas