

# Los Sanchez Assessment Trip Successfully Completed

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A group of five students and a faculty mentor traveled to Honduras from October 16-22 in order to gather information for our next project in the village of Los Sanchez – a pedestrian bridge. The travel team not only gathered information about available materials, they also identified a suitable site for the bridge and conducted a full survey of the site – and they did it all in the midst of some of the heaviest rains that Honduras has seen in a few years.

The rain made the trip difficult, but it certainly demonstrated the need for this project. Past trips that EWB-UTOLEDO has taken to Los Sanchez have been during the dry season. The landscape is arid, many of the plants are dead and passage to Los Sanchez is easy, crossing over a nearly dry riverbed. But in October – the height of the rainy season – the area is lush with green plants and crops are plenty, but the once-dry riverbed that separates Los Sanchez from the main road to the town of Orocuina is a meter deep with flow suitable for Class-V whitewater rafting. Needless to say, during these times Los Sanchez is cut off from Orocuina, and its schools, markets and health clinic. To get to Orocuina, residents must make a much longer, much more difficult hike that arrives to a side road much less traveled than the main road they can easily reach during the dry season. A bridge would guarantee the residents of Los Sanchez access to Orocuina all year round, no matter what the radical weather changes bring.

Based on preliminary findings, the bridge will have to be a suspension bridge with a span of about 60m (180ft) . Students who went on the trip will begin work on the bridge design under the supervision of experienced professionals both in the United States and Honduras. The team hopes to complete the design and submit pre-implementation paperwork by mid-December, with the aim of starting construction in early March.