

Jorge Anibal Xinico Muxtay

Striving for a better life

Estancado. Stuck.

“That’s what I was before textbooks and computers, before CoEd came to my community,” says Jorge Anibal Xinico Muxtay, a 23-year-old graduate of the CoEd Textbook and Computer Programs.

Jorge Anibal grew up in the remote, indigenous community of Chipiacúl, in Guatemala’s impoverished Western Highlands. As a child, whenever he would go out to help his father in the fields, he would study the vast expanse of dusty, red terrain and ponder the surprises, and opportunities, that lay just over the horizon. He didn’t know exactly what he was missing, but he had an uncanny sense that he was *estancado*—like his mother and father, and the many generations that came before him. He dreaded the prospect of being yet another in a long line of poor, subsistence farmers, scraping by season to season, forever struggling to achieve some modicum of prosperity. They didn’t strive for wealth, mind you. They just wanted to earn enough so that they didn’t have to choose between educating their children, or feeding them.

Jorge Anibal’s parents, Jorge and Juana, made sacrifices to keep their son in school. They, too, sensed that he was meant for bigger things. Jorge Anibal acknowledges and appreciates their efforts. “The two people I admire most in this world are my mother and my father,” he remarks. “They supported my education, even though it was difficult. I have always worked hard to make them proud, so they would know that their sacrifice was worth it.”

In 2001, CoEd set up a Textbook Program at Jorge Anibal’s school. “Classes were more interesting with the books,” he explains. But it was the arrival of a CoEd Computer Center in his community in 2002 that set him on a new course, and helped him break free from the cycle of poverty. “I was motivated by the computers,” Jorge Anibal continues. “Every time I sat down at one, I was glued to it. I knew I wanted to find a career that would allow me to spend as much time as possible using computers.”



Jorge Anibal Xinico thanks his parents and CoEd for helping him to stay in school and pursue a fulfilling career as an accountant. *Guatemala City, November 2009.*

And that’s exactly what Jorge Anibal did. He decided to use his new skills to become an accountant—and to escape the limited circumstances of his birth.

Jorge Anibal graduated from high school in 2007, and quickly found a job doing data entry and bookkeeping at a pharmaceutical lab in Guatemala City. In fact, Jorge Anibal’s supervisor was so impressed with his new employee’s computer skills and work ethic that Jorge Anibal received a promotion almost immediately.

Jorge Anibal’s face becomes visibly animated when he talks about his new position. “I’m really proud,” he says. “At first the job was hard. But now I know what to do, and I’m doing it well.”

Jorge Anibal juggles his work responsibilities with engineering classes at the university. He’s also taking English courses on the weekends. “I want to keep studying and keep learning,” he explains. “My goal is to become a systems engineer.” And the English? “Well, I’m going to use that when I travel. I want to see new places, and meet new people. After all, that’s the best way to learn.”

Of his many accomplishments, Jorge Anibal is perhaps most proud of the fact that he earns enough to help support his parents, and to keep his brother and sister in school. “Because of my education, I am now able to have a better life than my parents did,” he says. “I want my brother and sister to have that same opportunity.”