



Andrés Luc

Designing the future

“When I was a kid, computers seemed like the most magical and amazing things,” muses Andrés Luc, a handsome 23-year old in a crisp button-down dress shirt from the town of Hacienda María, Chimaltenango, in Guatemala’s impoverished Western Highlands. “I never had a chance to use one, though. My family was so poor. I had never even touched a computer before Cooperative for Education came to my community.”

It’s hard to imagine that the young professional who uses technology every day in his job as a graphic designer once stood in awe at the experience of learning to connect the proper cables between a CPU and a monitor.

“That was my very first computer lesson,” Andrés recalls. “After connecting the cables, we learned how to turn the computer on. The whole concept was so strange to me and my friends, and so far away from any experience we’d ever had. I’ll never forget it.”

From these humble beginnings, Andrés went on to learn more complicated tasks, such as how to create a spreadsheet and simple database, how to make a PowerPoint presentation, and how to use word processing programs.

Andrés eventually graduated from middle and high school. He then decided to enroll in a graphic design class. “It helped me get the job I have today,” he reports.

In 2008, Andrés became the head graphic designer for a local publication called the *Editorial Cholsamaj*. That same year, he also enrolled at San Carlos University and began studying for a degree in education. He wants to continue his design work, but he also teaches computer courses on the side.

“I love sharing what I’ve learned with my students,” Andrés beams. “I see myself in them. I remember when I got so much satisfaction from just being able to turn computers on!” Andrés smiles broadly, shaking his head slowly from side to side to signal his own amazement at just how far he’s come.



He then goes on to discuss the specifics of his job, and how he uses his skills to design books, posters, and other publications. His technical chops—including mastering advanced software such as Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, Corel, Flash, and Mac OS X—would make Andrés competitive in any job market. The fact that he grew up a poor, indigenous boy in rural Guatemala makes his story all the more incredible.

“Like I said, computers used to amaze and even intimidate me,” Andrés recalls. “Now I can’t imagine my life without them.”

Though he has achieved great personal success, Andrés remains mindful of his roots and is grateful to the benefactors who helped him find his wings.

“I am in the debt of every person who is part of CoEd and who made me what I am today,” Andrés declares with a gracious smile. “They are changing the future, not just for me, but for so many others in my country.”

Andrés will continue to use what he’s learned through the CoEd Computer Centers Program to design his own future. He will also encourage other promising young people—growing up poor and indigenous—to do the same.