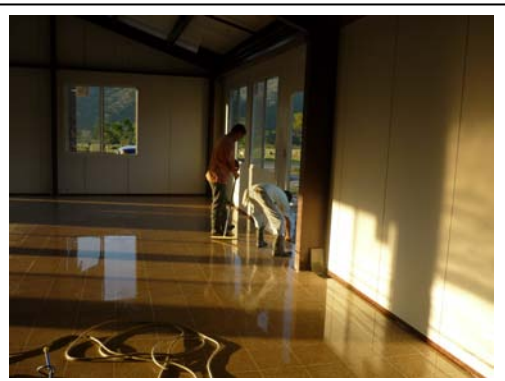


Terrazzo Flooring

Doing things differently is all part of the process while working in Honduras. Unlike what we are accustomed to doing stateside, we always expected to encounter changes and unanticipated events during our various visits. For instance, in building construction we would typically lay down the flooring at home after the roof has been put on, but thanks to much warmer weather in the tropics, we were not bound by that conventional practice, even though we were working in the rainy season.



The concrete building pad had been in place for several months and since the steel side beams that support the roof were on site and being erected by the construction team, there was no reason not to start work on laying the floor. Since *Manos Amigas* (MA) selected terrazzo tiles, a durable native stone material as the covering, work could commence before the roof was put on. This way we were able to save time.



Having seen flooring samples in San Pedro Sula, MA selected 12-inch square, one-inch thick, block tiles with beautifully interspersed scattered patterns of pebbles sporting blue, green, gray and beige tones. Because of the weight and distance involved in transporting materials for the 10,000 square foot floor, three tractor trailers hauled loads of terrazzo across the mountains, requiring a journey of more than four hours.

Loading docks and automated equipment are not routinely available in this part of Honduras. Consequently, as soon as the materials arrived on-site, each of the tiles was off-loaded by hand and stacked around the building pad for installation the very next day. Once cemented in place, the flooring could withstand the rigors of weathering before installing the roof. When completed and under roof, but before the side panels and interior walls went up, the stone tiles were machine polished to a smooth finish and bright luster. The local Honduran crew exhibited a great deal of skilled craftsmanship, showing great pride in installing the beautiful floor.