

## Key Themes in NHLSCP History:

- *People to people; reject US intervention in Central America*
- *Target root causes of poverty.*
- *Meet immediate short term needs, but work towards social justice longer term.*

The New Haven/León Sister City Project was **founded in 1984**, at the front end of a movement of sister-city relationships that sprung up between Nicaraguan cities and North American and European cities throughout the 1980's. The vision of the NH/LSCP in the 1980's was to create healthy ties between US and Nicaraguan citizens as at a time when the government of the US was engaged in an illegal war against Nicaragua. Our **alternative citizens' foreign policy supported Nicaraguans literacy, public health, and anti-poverty efforts in their vision of creating a more just society.**



**Delegations** served to connect US citizens with the reality in Nicaragua - different from what the US media was portraying - **and understand root causes of poverty** which was part of NHLSCP's work to educate and mobilize support for global social justice in US.

**Hurricane Mitch in 1998 had a huge impact on the region** and the local government asked a number of international NGOs to switch from Leon work to supporting rural communities displaced by the Mitch. So **NHLSCP shifted to working with the rural community of Goyena**, which meant also **paying more attention to environmental issues** important to that community including clean water, and smoke and chemical pollution from sugar cane plantations.



The need for an **Afterschool Program** was identified in early 2000s by community residents as critical given the lack of resources directed to rural schools, and education became a key component of NHLSCP's work. This also included working with parents to address systemic issues like teachers not showing up, the lack of educational materials, and the need for a school lunch program. Through the Education Program, **the organization looked to both address immediate needs and to work with parents to advocate for a higher quality public schools longer term.**

From 2008- 2010 NHLSCP organized an **advocacy campaign** to pressure Nicaragua Sugar Estates, the World Bank, and the Nicaraguan government to negotiate with local workers dealing with a **chronic kidney disease epidemic killing dozens of sugar cane workers each year**. The workers were able to negotiate a settlement (more shade, more breaks, clean drinking water, health benefits) because of their organizing in Nicaragua, legal support from the Center for International Law, and NHLSCP advocacy.



**Recognizing increasing impacts of climate change** (like Hurricane Mitch) on agriculture in Nicaragua (droughts, flooding) began work to educate people about the **link between burning fossil fuels and hunger in Nicaragua**. This meant engaging people in the US in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the focus in the early years of NHLSCP climate change work was on educating people on the vulnerability of marginalized communities to climate/weather shocks, especially with regards to increasing food insecurity. As it became clear that climate change could create significant displacement and increase poverty throughout Central America, NHLSCP recognized it as a threat to the organization's anti-poverty work

The EcoStove Project places clean efficient cookstoves with families and small businesses in Goyena and Troilo to **reduce indoor air pollution** (responsible for a significant amount of respiratory disease), **wood expense, and greenhouse gas emissions in rural villages**. We invite people in the global north to support the project both for its concrete impacts and as a recognition of our need to support climate justice.



The **Domestic Violence Prevention Program** began in 2013 after NHLSCP received a grant for education of women about their rights and how to address domestic violence. NHLSCP staff member Erendia Vanegas connected NHLSCP's **new project to feminist advocacy organizing in Leon, as it was clear government policies needed to change to better protect women and girls**. This effort involved rural women NHLSCP was working with in Goyena in efforts to learn about and push for policy change related to police services and other domestic violence prevention efforts.