

New Haven/León Sister City Project
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*NH/LSCP supports education
and sustainable development in
Nicaragua and New Haven.*

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NEW HAVEN / LEÓN

Sister City Project



Annual Report 2016

New Haven, Connecticut

León, Nicaragua Sisters since 1984

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Cover: Leon based stove manufacturer explaining new stove to Goyena resident.

Photo: View from center of Leon with Cathedral on the left and volcano in the distance.

ONCE AGAIN.....NO IS NOT ENOUGH

In her most recent book *No Is Not Enough*, Naomi Klein posits that in our current political climate saying no to the policies of our current President is not enough. Rather, we must come up with a vision of how to live differently in this world, a vision that is inclusive, compassionate, and nonviolent. Her call brings to mind the origins of the Nicaragua sister city movement.



In the 1980's Ronald Reagan was waging a not so covert war against the people of Nicaragua. In response, citizens across the U.S. protested. In addition, they came up with a better idea of how to relate to the Nicaraguan people that was mutual, non violent and productive. Across the nation, friends, neighbors and strangers came together to form sister cities with Nicaraguan cities that welcomed this collaborative relationship. This development brought direction, inspiration and energy to ordinary citizens. In most cases, in both countries, local organizers sought and received official recognition of the relationship with their local government. At its height, there were some 125 such pairings.

Something similar is occurring now in related to President Trump's withdrawal of the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord. States and cities across the U. S. are independently pledging to work to meet the goals of the Paris agreement. As of this writing, 12 states, Puerto Rico and 246 mayors have committed to taking stronger climate action.

In recent years, the NH/LSCP has brought together a number of groups concerned with climate change. Out of these meetings grew goNHgo, which encourages citizens to cut down on greenhouse gas emissions by using alternative transportation. In addition, NH/LSCP also organized the New Haven Climate Movement coalition which collaborated with the Mayor to create the NH Climate and Sustainability Framework (nhcsf.org.), a road map for the city's response to climate change. Once again, grassroots groups are taking action. We cannot wait for change to come from the top. We must act now - especially given the urgency of the climate emergency - and bring about the change we need.

The Board and Staff take this opportunity to send out a warm thank you. You have supported our vital work here and in Nicaragua. Day in and day out you are with us in our shared work. Thank you for your kind words, loyalty and financial support. Adelante!

| NH/LSCP Financial Statements | FY 2016 | FY 2015 | FY 2014 |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Current Assets | | | |
| Total assets | 170,843 | 162,982 | 173,371 |
| Liabilities | | | |
| Total Liabilities | 36,060 | 41,582 | 46,430 |
| Equity | 134,783 | 121,400 | 126,941 |
| Total Liabilities and Equity | 170,843 | 162,982 | 173,371 |
| Statement of Revenue and Expenses | | | |
| Support and Revenue | | | |
| Contributions | 128,636 | 119,984 | 118,722 |
| Net Service Revenue | 22,369 | 6,183 | 21,159 |
| Investment Income | 3,737 | 747 | 3,238 |
| Costs of Goods/Services | (14,101) | | |
| Gross Profit | 140,641 | 126,914 | 131,746* |
| Expense | | | |
| Program | 107,862 | 108,204 | 108,337 |
| Supporting Services | 5,356 | 10,210 | 9,296 |
| Fundraising | 14,040 | 14,040 | 14,040 |
| Total | 127,258 | 132,454 | 131,673 |
| Net Income | 13,383 | (5,540) | 73 |

2016 Donors

Foundations & Grants

Massachusetts Audubon Society
New England Grassroots Environmental Fund
New Haven Green Fund
Patagonia
Peace & Social Justice Fund
Perrin Foundation
Trico Foundation

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Dear Friends,

The importance of growing women's participation in public spaces, today more than ever, is a cause for struggle. The women and feminists of Nicaragua have been in the front lines demanding change and making use of these spaces, and declaring, "No more institutional abuse and no more impunity." Nevertheless, the feminist movement of our country is limited to women with access to higher education. Rural women – the growers, the community leaders, who work day to day for the sustainable development of their communities - often do not know their own human rights. This is due to the machista cultural context that normalizes male violence. In addition, there is a lack of government support for comprehensive education especially in areas that receive the least attention by the state.

This reality is lived out daily in the communities of Goyena and Troilo where we work. Nuvia Quiroz, a women's rights promoter, has accompanied women survivors from Goyena who have sought justice after being abused. She has shared stories of the institutional abandonment of these women when they report their abuser to the police. When one woman was physically abused by her partner, Nuvia accompanied her and witnessed the re-victimization of the woman by the police. This is a woman with very scarce resources, and no knowledge of her rights, who was already feeling guilty about the abuse she had suffered, which put her life at risk. Unfortunately, cases like this are all too common. But there is hope.

In the last five years, the New Haven Leon SCP community has been more attentive to all that it means to be a woman in the rural communities of Nicaragua. This has led us to integrate this work into all our programs, and actively defend the rights of women in these communities, in public spaces, at home, and their economic rights.

Knowing, as a Nicaraguan woman, and through the processes of which I have been a part with the NHLSCP – it's clear that to break the ties of patriarchal societies requires integrated processes. The efforts, trainings and accompaniment by NHLSCP are not enough. If women are to achieve their full dignity and rights, the will of the institutions of the state and society must act with them and on their behalf.

While we at NHLSCP are proud of the work we are doing in the promotion of the human rights of women, we are clear that there is much struggle ahead.

The recent election of a president in the U.S., labeled by many sectors of North American society as divisive and misogynist, has raised a new air of struggle. We follow this movement and applaud this wave of solidarity for less privileged populations. It gives us strength to pursue with determination our demands from our own lands. Equally in Nicaragua, the women of rural communities go out into the streets to demand respect for our rights, for a life free of all kinds of violence, and we do it from our own contexts, making problematic barriers visible for rural and urban women alike.

We are extremely proud as a community of New Haven /Leon Sister City Project's reaffirmation of its commitment to this struggle, and to this historical cause. But it's a broad struggle that still needs much energy to achieve equity among all the inhabitants of this planet - which is the only home we have! Recognizing this, we women reaffirm that our struggles are interconnected and, therefore, go beyond defending our rights as such. The struggle is also the defense of the land, the environment, and social justice in all its senses and in all its colors.

With much hope of always finding ourselves on the path of justice, I wish you much peace! Take heart... we have a lot of fighting left!

Erendira A Vanegas

Erendira Vanegas
Domestic Violence Prevention Program
and Delegation Coordinator



Participants and women's rights training in February in Troilo.

We are a COMMUNITY of people from Connecticut and Nicaragua working together.

Our goals are to:

- Address concrete NEEDS - such as rural education and sustainable development projects...
- Create SOCIAL JUSTICE through our women's rights and climate change programs
- Develop local LEADERSHIP to increase community power and autonomy...
- Build RELATIONSHIPS and understanding between peoples of both communities through internships and delegations.
- Inspire ACTIVISM through a deeper understanding of our role as global citizens.



Counting:

- **70** 3-5 year olds currently enrolled in rural community preschools getting daily hot meals
- **10** secondary students have school supplies subsidized through work with Environmental Youth Brigade
- **35** women in gender support and empowerment groups in two rural communities
- **1300** delegates and interns traveled to Nicaragua over 33 years
- **8** climate change activist interns in New Haven
- **12** environmentally friendly healthy cook stoves installed funded by US carbon offsets
- **8** rural students able to attend university in Leon
- **1** new School library staffed and stocked with age-appropriate books.
- **50** domestic violence trainings in two communities
- **8** forum theater workshops



Our Programs:

- Build Understanding and Community Through DELEGATIONS.
- Focus on Gender Discrimination and EMPOWER WOMEN.
- Create Actions for Local and Global CLIMATE JUSTICE.
- Provide Incentives and Resources to Further EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.



Photos clockwise from top: Students on Goyena school library; Domestic Violence Prevention Program (DVPP) training; Women at DVPP training; Trolio preschool teachers with donated school supplies; Interns doing climate outreach in New Haven; Afterschool Program students with environmental posters; DVPP members sharing a meal; Student outside school waiting to go home.

