

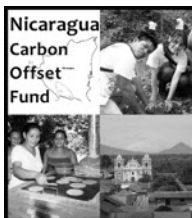


New Haven/León Sister City Project

Summer 2013 Newsletter

New! NH/LSCP Nicaragua Carbon Offset Fund

Dr Kim Yong Kim recently wrote about the threat of climate change, "While every region of the world will be affected, the poor and most vulnerable would be hit hardest." Because of this concern and realities on the ground in Nicaragua, New Haven/Leon SCP has been working to help cut greenhouse gas pollution.



To this end, we are creating the **Nicaragua Carbon Offset Fund (NCOF)**, to collect offsets for air and car travel. While cutting present greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is the best step, offsetting can be a good short term option for reducing emissions created elsewhere.

NH/LSCP will collect the offset funds through our donation page (or by check) and distribute periodically to either:

- NH/LSCP León's efforts supporting the installation of more efficient cook stoves in rural Nicaragua where we work. The cleaner efficient wood stoves (and possibly solar cookers), reduce greenhouse gases, decrease pollution responsible for respiratory disease, and reduce funds/time people need to spend buying/collecting fuel.

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Mural above from school wall in Goyena.

NH/LSCP is in the process of doing a survey to better understand cook stove use in Goyena, and are researching other organizations already active with efficient cook stove projects with whom we could work.

- Channel funds through certified carbon offset projects like the COTAP reforestation project in Limay, Nicaragua.

To get a donation/offset estimate for emissions for air travel and car use, we will invite NCOF participants to use a simple carbon calculator at our Donation page online.

Part of the goal in establishing NCOF is to invite us all to recognize the real impacts (although maybe hidden) of our choices, and to take responsibility for limiting the negative impact on others or future generations. The average greenhouse gas emissions per capita in the US is 20.7 tons, while in Nicaragua it 0.8. The emissions above what the earth (about 2 tons per person) can absorb are what's driving the climate changes in New Haven and Nicaragua.

In Nicaragua the expectation is that climate change will bring bigger storms and heavier rain (like Hurricane Mitch in 1998 which displaced the community of Goyena) and more severe droughts. Impacts are already being seen especially with coffee farmers (see graphic to left) who are finding the climate too warm for coffee growing. Some organizations are trying to help farmers explore other crops to replace the coffee, but it may not be easy given the topography and the fact that coffee is a good, easily transportable cash crop.

We invite you to consider participating and/or to learn more at www.newhavenleon.org/donation. ♦

Impact of changing climate.

The migration of coffee

Optimal altitudes for coffee production

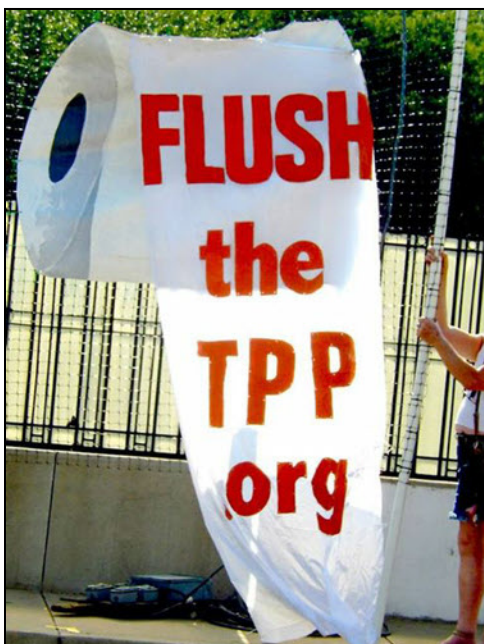


NAFTA on Steroids

In June NH/LSCP invited Lacey Kohlmoos of Public Citizen to speak about the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The article below is by her co-worker, Lori Wallach. Excerpted from *The Nation Magazine*.

While the Occupy movement has forced a public discussion of extreme corporate influence on every aspect of our lives, behind closed doors corporate America is implementing a stealth strategy to formalize its rule in a truly horrifying manner. The mechanism is the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Negotiations have been conducted in extreme secrecy, so you are in good company if you have never heard of it. But the thirteenth round of negotiations between the United States and eight Pacific Rim nations will be held in San Diego in early July.

The TPP has been cleverly misbranded as a trade agreement (yawn) by its corporate boosters. As a result, since George W. Bush initiated negotiations in 2008, it has cruised along under the radar. The Obama administration initially paused the talks, ostensibly to develop a new approach compatible with candidate Obama's pledges to replace the old NAFTA-based trade model. But by late 2009, talks restarted just where Bush had left off.



Think of the TPP as a stealthy delivery mechanism for policies that could not survive public scrutiny. Indeed, only two of the twenty-six chapters of this corporate Trojan horse cover traditional trade matters. The rest embody the most florid dreams of the 1 percent—grandiose new rights and privileges for corporations and permanent constraints on government regulation. They include new investor safeguards to ease job offshoring and assert control over natural resources, and severely limit the regulation of financial services, land use, food safety, natural resources, energy, tobacco, healthcare and more.

Countries would be obliged to conform all their domestic laws and regulations to the TPP's rules—in effect, a corporate coup d'état. The proposed pact would limit even how governments can spend their tax dollars. Buy Ameri-

"...grandiose new rights and privileges for corporations and permanent constraints on government regulation."

ca and other Buy Local procurement preferences that invest in the US economy would be banned, and "sweat-free," human rights or environmental conditions on government contracts could be challenged. If the TPP comes to fruition, its retrograde rules could be altered only if all countries agreed, regardless of domestic election outcomes or changes in public opinion. And unlike much domestic legislation, the TPP would have no expiration date.

Failure to conform domestic laws to the rules would subject countries to lawsuits before TPP tribunals empowered to authorize trade sanctions against member countries. ...TPP empowers corporations to sue governments—outside their domestic court systems—over any action the corporations believe undermines their expected future profits or rights under the pact. ...—empowered to order governments to pay corporations unlimited amounts in fines...The NAFTA version of this scheme has forced governments to pay more than \$350 million to corporations after suits against

Rock to Rock 2013 Big Success! Thank You!



Above Allie Perry and Susan Bramhall head out on 20 mile ride; NHLSPers gather at East Rock Park at the end of the ride. NH/LSCP raised over \$15,000 through the event.

toxic bans, land-use policies, forestry rules and more.

How could something this extreme have gotten so far? The process has been shockingly secretive. In 2010 TPP countries agreed not to release negotiating texts until four years *after* a deal was done or abandoned. Astonishingly, Senator Ron Wyden, chair of the Senate committee with official jurisdiction over TPP, has been denied access even to US proposals to the negotiations. But 600 corporate representatives serving as official US trade advisers have full access to TPP texts and a special role in negotiations.

The goal was to complete the TPP this year. Thankfully, opposition by some countries to the most extreme corporate demands has slowed negotiations. Every country has rejected the US proposal to extend drug patent monopolies. This text was leaked, allowing government health officials and activists in all the countries to

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Hopkins Delegate's Blog

(Below are excerpts from the June Hopkins School delegation student blog. The delegation was lead by teacher Susan Bennett).

Communication and connections

I went into this trip knowing very little Spanish. I had taken it for a few years in elementary school but that was all. I had thought this would be a big deal while trying to connect with people, such as the children at the school or my host-mom. In the end I thought my only sources of communication would be the little Spanish I already knew, hand motions and drawings. Although the first few days were a little overwhelming, dealing with the language barrier, in the end some of the Spanish I had forgotten came

NAFTA on Steroids cont...

fight back. Many countries have also rejected a US proposal that would forbid countries from using capital controls, taxes or other macro-prudential measures to limit the destructive power of financial speculators.

However, we face a race against time—much of the TPP text has been agreed on. Will the banksters, Big Pharma, Big Oil, agribusiness, tobacco multinationals and the other usual suspects get away with this massive assault on democracy? Will the public wake up to this threat and fight back, demanding either a fair deal or no deal? The Doha Round of WTO expansion, the FTAA and other corporate attacks via "trade" agreements were successfully derailed when citizens around the world took action to hold their governments accountable. ◇

To learn more and get involved, go to tpp2012.com. Lori Wallach, director of Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch division, is co-author of [Whose Trade Organization?](#)...

back and then I realized that if I did mess up my Spanish the worst that could happen was that they would think I'm an American. Also some very valuable connections are made non-verbally. At one point we were working with second graders and I helped a child decorate his fan. Even though he and I couldn't have a "real" conversation seeing his face light up and knowing how happy he was is one of the most amazing feelings ever.

Getting to know Goyena

Before today we had been oddly close to the community driving through Goyena every day- without being able to really interact with the students' families. But after lunch this afternoon, we split into groups to survey the neighborhood about one of the pressing issues in the community. In Goyena, electricity is common but gas stoves are not, and most people cook over a wood fire. But it isn't only wood- Marta, one of the teachers in the preschool, told us that the fires are usually started with plastic because it burns easily. (It wouldn't ever have occurred to me to burn plastic to start a fire,...) The smoke from all of the fires is unpleasant for us visiting, but for the women (some men cook, but mostly it's mothers and daughters) who spend hours every day in the smoke filled kitchens, the smoke is dangerous.

This afternoon we worked with a group of young people from Goyena (*Youth Brigade*) and walked around to talk to people in the neighborhood. It was cool; everyone whose door we came to was really happy to answer our questions. We asked them about how often they used their fire stoves, and who worked there, and for how long they cooked over the stove, and whether they had respiratory illnesses. The project itself was very cool, but for me the best part was being able to talk to the people of Goyena, and get a better idea of their homes and their lives.



Photo Susan Bennett

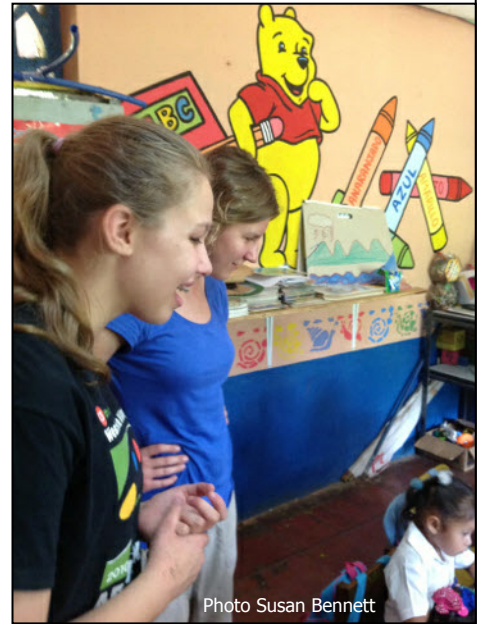


Photo Susan Bennett

Delegates help repair school desks and help out in the preschool.

Last day in the Community

We met with high school kids today. A building no bigger than a Payless shoe store housed around 125 students. There was no electricity so the inside, portioned off rooms were very dark, and needless to say, the heat was not exactly conducive to learning. It was a lot of fun to talk with kids our own age and learn about what their likes and dislikes are. We like doing the same things, but we don't face the same challenges they do. They are lucky their parents let them go to school!

Tonight is the goodbye fiesta with our families. It should be a fun time but we're all sad it's time to leave already. ◇ (Read more blog notes at: hopkinsnicaragua.wordpress.com/)

Donald Cortez (1972-2013)

On July 16th, Donald Cortez, a leader with ASOCHIVIDA, passed away. NH/LSCP delegates usually met with



Donald as he was active leading ASOCHIVIDA's effort to address the chronic kidney disease epidemic among sugar cane workers there. The letter below is from Kris Genoveses, from Centerfor International Environmental Law who represented ASOCHIVIDA in negotiations with Nicaragua Sugar Estates and the IFC/World Bank.

Donald died two weeks ago. I'm still trying to overcome the shock. It shouldn't have come as a surprise, though, as Donald was suffering from chronic kidney disease of unknown cause, and progression of the disease is inevitable, unless those suffering get early access to care or kidney transplant. Donald was the president of Asociación Chichigalpa por la Vida (ASOCHIVIDA), an association of former sugarcane workers in Nicaragua who are suffering from chronic kidney disease.

Despite, or maybe because of, his own struggle with the disease, Donald fought tirelessly to secure benefits for the 2,200 members of his organization and to find the cause of the disease. Through a mediation convened by the Compliance Advisor Ombudsman of the International Finance Corporation, he helped to secure monthly distribution of food provisions for the members; income generation projects that have benefited more than 500 members directly and provided revenue for the organization that is, in turn, used to help members cover their medical and funeral expenses; a new peritoneal dialysis program with seven participants; 60 new houses and 40 on the way that provide the conditions necessary for the people

who are sick to receive dialysis; and ground-breaking research on the disease by Boston University School of Public Health. Together, these benefits are worth close to \$6 million, and there is more yet to come.

When I first started working with the five-member board of ASOCHIVIDA six years ago, I would always worry that they wouldn't be there when I came back. But Donald was strong, both mentally and physically with a clarity of vision and resolute determination that didn't leave any doubt that he would achieve his goal. As he would say, "hay mucho por hacer" (there is so much to do). He could stand in front of the often raucous assembly meetings of 500 people, and when he took the bullhorn, everyone would fall silent -- listening. They trusted and admired him, and they knew that he had their best interests at heart. They knew he wouldn't lead them astray.

It wasn't all tears the last six years. We laughed a lot. Donald, with a mischievous glint in his eye, and the other members of the Board - Ezequiel, Vicente, Salvador, Cecilio - would tease each other, and anyone else nearby, mercilessly. Donald's radiant smile, so hard to capture in photos, was almost always one joke away. The Board was by Donald's side when he passed away on July 16th. He is survived by his wife and three children.

One of Donald's biggest goals remains unfilled though. Through the mediation, ASOCHIVIDA secured a commitment of \$320,000 to build a renal clinic to provide dialysis and improved care next to the new general hospital in Chichigalpa. Despite having secured the funds, the land and the plans for the clinic, ASOCHIVIDA has waited two years for the Government of Nicaragua to begin construction on the clinic. The hospital is about to be finalized, but there is no sign that the Government of Nicaragua will build the much needed renal clinic. ♦ ACTION: *Tell Nicaraguan government to move on the clinic. Go to newhavenleon.org*

Scenes from León



Photos from top: New library space created in school, but the hope is to create separate library in the future; Youth Brigade visits Lake Managua to learn about the environment; Hopkins delegates and Youth Brigade members prep to do cook stove survey in June; Intern Eleanor Marshall leading activity in afterschool program in June.

Poverty's Impacts

Poverty, and the stresses it creates on families, continues to be the major challenge in Nicaragua, and can undermine communities efforts to advance. Recently, NH/LSCP staff have reported losing community members in Goyena who had been important to the work.

Some are lost to chronic kidney disease. Education Coordinator Ivett Fonseca wrote in July: "... yesterday (Goyena) resident Fernando Osejo died from kidney failure, a total of four deaths during the year of the same problem... Today we will use the truck to help move the body to the cemetery. Sad to see people still dying... leaving their families, making situations more difficultespecially because children often leave school to help the family cope. This is the sad reality of the community." Even though the pay is quite low (about \$1000 per year) and there are health risks, people still end up working in the cane fields as there is no other work.

Other community members are lost to economic necessity. Leaders of both the Environmental Youth Brigade and the Women's Program

have had to leave to find work. Many community members are away for long stretches working in Costa Rica where the pay is better

The the day to day realities in Goyena reflect the global problem of an un-fair economic system. The



Girl at preschool door in Goyena.

July-August edition of Monthly Review (p.124) reported that ..., "The gap between the richest and poorest regions of the world in the last quarter

century of the 20th century rose from 13:1 to 19:1.....In 2008 the richest 10 percent of the world's population consumed 59 percent of world output. In contrast the poorest 10 percent consumed a mere 0.5 percent (with the poorest 50 percent consuming 7.2%).

One of the goals of the NH/LSCP delegation program is to help people in the US get a better understanding of these realities, especially as poverty gets little attention here. Clearly a system that returns so little of the created wealth to workers who work so hard is broken. ◇



Above: "Swarming at Chapel and High Streets in July; Staff Abbie Kundishora (left) tabling a Wooster Square farmers market.

Walk! Bike! Transit!

Our WalkBikeTransit (WBT) campaign continues to reach out in creative ways in New Haven. Our street art includes "Swarmings" (800 colorful teacher/kid-made butterflies) that have been installed on street corners for day-long invitations to passers by to take action to cut greenhouse gases. We have just started our Cars, Coal, Cows and Planes (CCCP) street art project that will feature substantial paper mache sculptures of the same... again to pop up around the city and for longer term installations. The CCCP are four big GHG polluters. ◇



Educate Ya!!

Needed for education programs in Goyena:

- School-age books in Spanish.
- Teachers to organize in-school Coin Drives to help buy school supplies.
- Teacher delegates (and others) to join education delegation to Nicaragua.



Thank You to The Community Foundation of Greater New Haven and The Greater New Haven Green Fund for generous support of NH/LSCP's WalkBikeTransit Campaign.

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*NH/LSCP supports education
and sustainable development in
Nicaragua and New Haven.*

Coming Soon..!!!



Upcoming NH/LSCP Events

Forum Theater Workshop September 20-22, New Haven.

- ◇ NH/LSCP Education Coordinator Ivett Fonseca visit September 18-29; presentation TBA
- ◇ Teachers Delegation to Nicaragua November 16-23
- ◇ Holiday Fiesta & Gift Bazaar: Shop for a cause! Fair-trade overseas crafts, local goods, and new products. December 7.
- ◇ December 11th Potluck on chronic kidney disease.. Details TBA

Photo: Parade in León
celebrating education of
children

