



New Haven/León Sister City Project

Summer/Fall 2020 Newsletter

Leon Responds to COVID-19 and Economic Crisis

Nicaragua is now not only experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, but also a post 2018 Uprising recession and the continued violation of most fundamental political rights. This means that the most vulnerable people are having to confront situations of greater stress, including the loss of jobs, and lost remittances as many migrants who had been providers returned.

Therefore NHLSCP is faced with the challenge of creating programs that address the most basic need as it is; food security. For this, we are moving ahead with three efforts described below. Through the Education Program we will have a focus on providing immediate short-term nutrition support for the most vulnerable population (children and families that do not have any income) in Troilo and Goyena. A second effort will aim at increasing family food production in Goyena, and hopefully doing the same in Troilo in the near future. Finally, we are offering clean cookstoves at lower cost that will provide health and cost saving benefits to families.

Expanded Education Program Nutrition Support

During severe crises in communities - like Hurricane Mitch in 1998 - food insecurity can have significant negative impacts on child development. In an effort to support healthy child development and reduce family stress,

the Education Program hopes to significantly expand its nutrition program in the short term. The program will benefit a total of 122 families for an initial period of five months.

In Troilo, we will begin a new nutrition program that will serve 70 children, with 40 children active in the After School program and 30 children in preschool. They will be provided with a full plate of food three days a week that includes basic grains, meats, vegetables and fruits, and twice a week they will receive a snack of milk and cereals.

In Goyena, we will expand the existing Afterschool nutrition support program to reach 52 children - 35 from the Afterschool Program and 17 children from preschool - who will receive similar support as in Troilo.

Also 45 families that are in particular need will be provided with packages of basic products to cushion the economic crisis. 25 families in Goyena and 20 families in Troilo will be given packets of beans, grains, oil, etc., for a period of five months.

Children in both the Afterschool and Preschool programs in Goyena and Troilo are studying at home using

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Mural above from Estili, Nicaragua



Photos: Posting COVID-19 guidelines in Goyena and washing hands at Afterschool Program.

packets provided by teachers and with some one-on-one support. The Education Program has also been very active in promoting mask use, hand washing and social distancing.

Family Garden Project

There have been discussions at NHLSCP and in the community for a couple years about the possibility of the Domestic Violence Prevention Program (DVPP) working more on economic empowerment for women and girls. There have been visits to other women's organizations to

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Leon Response *continued...*



Students lining up to wash hands in Goyena.

their successful efforts too. In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic crisis, we consider the implementation of the family gardens project an important effort to help families access sufficient, safe, and nutritious food in the long term. Also, at a time when government repression has shut down advocacy efforts and public discussion of human rights, much of the previous DVPP program work is now not possible.

The implementation of agroecological gardens - where women are involved as creators - fosters resilience while establishing and maintaining networks among members of the DVPP. Furthermore, it provides a setting where the voices, knowledge and needs of women can be shared in a democratic space. Agroecological family gardens empower women by



Women exploring locations for possible family gardens.

enabling the construction of greater autonomy based on their own knowledge, and their participation in networks that expand relationships that support independence.

According to the UN, there are 122 women for every 100 men, between the age of 25 and 34, living in extreme poverty. In turn, the Food and Agriculture Organization indicates that women are responsible for half of the production of food and represent 43% of the agricultural workforce worldwide. Despite their role women face multiple barriers to fulfillment of their rights and access to land, education, resources, a decent work and leadership positions. Agriculture, from a gender perspective, can be decisive in improving food security and fighting poverty.

The Family Garden Project will include technical training and support, basic resources to get started (seeds, tools, fencing), and workshops to deepen the women's understanding of agroecology.

Topics to be addressed in workshops include:

- The role of women in agriculture in pre-Columbian times, compared to the present
- Importance of women in agriculture.
- Women and land tenure in Nicaragua
- Food security and sovereignty
- Women and agroecology
- Family production systems
- Sustainable use of soil in agriculture
- What is the family garden
- Advantages of the family garden
- Consideration for establishing a family garden
- Crop socialization
- Seeding, irrigation and fertilizer methods.

The DVPP is working with consultant Mayra Aleman, who has experience developing family garden projects in

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Mantengase sano!



Photos from top: Students studying at home; Karla giving out lunch to students; public health poster for students.

Summer Heats Up Climate Organizing



The New Haven Climate Movement (organized by NHLSCP) continued to organize local youth and engaged three interns to push three campaigns this summer on climate education, electrification, and a shoreline climate campaign.



NHCM began work on instituting a new in-school New Haven **Climate Education** program that engages high school students in learning about climate change and involving them (and their families) in actions that will reduce greenhouse gas pollution. This campaign identified best practices for climate education, engaged allies, and pushed the Board of Education and Mayor to implement a climate education program. The youth developed a Climate Justice Schools proposal which the Board of Education is now considering.



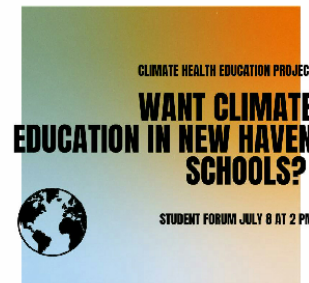
The **Electric Future Campaign** developed a public education and advocacy campaign to move towards adopting electric powered buildings, transportation, and appliances to reduce GHG emissions. In Connecticut, less than 50% of energy used to generate electricity comes from fossil fuels (and is mandated to go higher by 2030), so combined with the higher efficiency of using electricity, electrification will reduce emissions. NHCM is now meeting with the City Engineering Department to support electrification of all City buildings by 2030, and with the Planning Department to identify policy changes that will encourage new construction to have all electric systems.

This effort follows a City commitment to invest the \$620,000 in capital and other funds to reduce carbon emissions, support green jobs and public health, and create excitement for climate solutions.

NHCM is also organizing a **Connecticut Shoreline Campaign** to push for a Connecticut Green New Deal as a response to COVID-19 economic crisis. This campaign will be using oceans / shoreline / sea level rise themes and art to educate residents living along the coast. The campaign is working to engage the public to pressure key elected leaders who live along the shoreline to pass a CT Green New Deal. The CT GND committee has been doing research, creating great ocean/shoreline art, inviting in new members, and organizing an online forum on climate impacts on coastal Connecticut communities.



Photos this page - clockwise: One of many NHCM Zoom meetings; Electric Future media event on College Street; Climate education webinar invitation; Racial and climate justice teach-in in August; Electric Future Manifesto; Artwork for CT Shoreline campaign.



ELECTRIC FUTURE MANIFESTO:
A CALL TO SWITCH EVERYTHING FROM FOSSIL FUELS TO ELECTRIC.

NEW HAVEN CLIMATE MOVEMENT

ELECTRIC IS MUCH MORE EFFICIENT.
ELECTRIC IS QUIET.
ELECTRIC IS SAFER.
ELECTRIC COOKING DOESN'T CREATE INDOOR AIR POLLUTION.
ELECTRIC VEHICLES DON'T CREATE AIR POLLUTION.
ELECTRIC VEHICLES PRODUCE MUCH LESS WASTE HEAT.
ELECTRIC MOTORS REQUIRE MUCH LESS MAINTENANCE.
ELECTRIC'S CLEAN AND QUIET MOTORS ARE BETTER FOR WORKER HEALTH.
ELECTRIC FUTURE CAN BE POWERED 100% BY CONNECTICUT POWERED ENERGY, KEEPING BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN CT EACH YEAR.
ELECTRIC USE IS LESS HARMFUL TO NATURE WITH LESS NOISE, HEAT AND POLLUTION.
ELECTRIC FEATURE MEANS LESS UTILITY EXPENSE.
ELECTRIFICATION PAVES THE WAY TO CARBON-FREE FUTURE CT
ELECTRICITY GETS LESS CARBON INTENSE.
ELECTRIC OPTION/TECHNOLOGIES IN TRANSPORTATION AND HEATING/COOLING ARE ADVANCING AND USE IS ACCELERATING.
ELECTRIC IS ALREADY VERY POPULAR, EFFECTIVE, AND POWERS MOST OF OUR IMPORTANT TOOLS.
ELECTRIC USE CREATES FAR LESS DAMAGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO CLEAN UP.

Summer Interns Lead Projects

This summer NHLSCP had three summer interns work remotely to lead three different projects. Erica Drufva, a student at Wheaton College and a Hamden resident, worked on the Living Yard Project and the Climate Health Education Project.

Alyssa Chase, a UMASS Amherst student and Colorado resident worked on our NHCM climate education campaign. And Piper Darling, a MPH student at Benedictine University and Fairfield County resident, created and led a new 20isPlenty Campaign with goNewHavenGo. All brought lots on energy and creativity to these ongoing efforts and, given NHLSCP's small staff, made them possible!



goNewHavenGo 20isPlenty Campaign Launched

The NHLSCP-coordinated goNewHavenGo coalition launched a **20isPlenty** public awareness campaign aimed at making New Haven streets safer for all by asking drivers to commit to traveling at 20 mph. Driving higher speeds on city and neighborhood streets, puts vulnerable users (i.e., those walking, biking, kids playing, etc.) at much higher risk. With even more people using active forms of transportation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for safe streets has been amplified.

**SLOW DOWN
FOR SAFE
STREETS**



goNewHavenGo



Mayor Elicker speaking at 20isPlenty launch event in August.

NHLSCP Welcomes New Board Members!

Margarita Díaz was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In 1988, she moved to New York, where she worked in politics and government. In 1996, she became one of the founding editors of El Daily News, the New York Daily News' bilingual daily newspaper. In 2003, Margarita joined the Department of Journalism at Quinnipiac University, where she teaches writing, editing and courses on international news. She has traveled to Central America with journalism students three times as part of a course that seeks to explore important issues through the stories of individuals. Margarita is a proud alumna of the University of Puerto Rico. She has graduate degrees from The New School for Social Research and Wesleyan University. "I'm excited to join the board as it gives me a chance to expand my involvement with Nicaragua. For years, I've been interested in the work of NHLSCP, and I look forward to collaborating with the new board as we support and strengthen the organization's mission."

Alexandra Arroyo is a Special Deputy Assistant State's Attorney for the Division of Criminal Justice. Before becoming a prosecutor, Alexandra was an associate at Wiggin and Dana, LLC, a law firm in New Haven, Connecticut. Before law school, Alexandra was a second-grade dual language education teacher in Fort Worth, and through Teach for America taught in an underprivileged school district in northern Texas. Alexandra is also an adjunct professor at the University of Hartford. Alexandra received her J.D. from Quinnipiac University School of Law, where she served as President of the International Human Rights Organization and through IHR traveled to Nicaragua three times to participate in several legal conferences. She received her B.A. in Politics and Government from the University of Hartford. Alexandra joined the Board of NHLSCP because she is committed to fostering strong relationships between the U.S. and Central and South American countries in an effort to promote a more global community. Alexandra is fluent in Spanish.

Britt Gordon Britt Gordon is a native of Darien, CT and has a deep passion for serving and supporting the communities of Nicaragua, from afar and in-person. He has traveled to Nicaragua three separate times: twice he traveled to Leon to teach English and Leadership at a local language school, and a third time to organize a bracelet and bag weaving social enterprise in Tipitapa, a rural village in eastern Nicaragua. Britt is fluent in Spanish and currently works as a Business Development Representative at Lighter Nutrition. Britt is passionate about nutrition and regenerative organic farming and developing creative solutions to climate change. Britt is excited to join the NHLSCP Board in order to work collaboratively with local NHLSCP counterparts to develop solutions to the needs in Nicaragua most specifically through nutrition, farming, education, and climate change initiatives. He holds a BS in Business with a Minor in Latin American Studies from Boston College.

Leon Response *continued...*

other communities, to guide this new effort.

NHLSCP Ramps Up Clean Cookstove Program

In response to both COVID-19 and the climate crisis, NHLSCP has significantly increased clean stove outreach and installation this year. Led by new staff Yara Perez, eight stoves were delivered on May 15th - seven of them in the Goyena community and one in Troilo. Traditional open fire cooking exposes families - and especially women and children - to a large amount of smoke inside the homes. In the midst of this health crisis, environmentally friendly cooking can play an important role as it helps families avoid direct contact with the smoke, lessens the risk of respiratory disease, and saves money on visits to doctors, and on the purchase of a large quantity of firewood.

Each family that received a clean cookstove was provided information on the maintenance of the stoves, and was made aware of the health benefits obtained from proper use of the stoves.



Family showing off COVID-19 protective gear, though this equipment might also be helpful cooking over a traditional open fire!

Home visits were also made to families who already had more efficient stoves to verify the proper use of the stoves, that they actually use them, and to measure the reduction of firewood. A scale was brought to weigh the daily consumption of firewood for a period of one month (from May 15 to June 15); we learned that, on average, families use 70% less wood. This is especially beneficial for the families during this crisis since the savings can be used for the purchase of food.

In the case of the tortilla business that got a larger clean cookstove, the family reported saving almost three hours of work daily as the stove can handle more tortillas. It also cut the firewood used in half, saving time gathering and chopping wood.

The clean cookstoves are underwritten by offset donations in the US to the NHLSCP Nicaragua Carbon Offset Fund, which pays 50% of the cost of each \$130 stove. The Nicaragua Carbon Offset Fund invites people to donate offsets for their air and car travel carbon emissions. While cutting present greenhouse gas emissions is the best step, offsetting can be a good short term option for reducing emissions created elsewhere.

(newhavenleon.org/projects/carbon-offset-fund/) Typically, a family saves about the same amount in reduced wood cost that they pay monthly to purchase the stove (about \$5).

Cookstove outreach is continuing to other families. The positive experience of the families with new stoves is a great help in recruiting more clean cookstove users. A significant barrier at this point to further cookstove program expansion is that many families have very limited resources. The NHLSCP is trying to give more significant discounts to families with children and for those with higher risk of respiratory sickness.



Photos from top: Women with new tortilla stove and regular model; weighing wood to measure savings.

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

Thank You for your ongoing support!

Make a Plan to Amplify Your Impact

If you would like to extend your support of New Haven Leon Sister City Project to make a lasting impact, there are several gift arrangements to choose from. Making a meaningful gift is easier than you think. A gift in your will or trust, for example, is accomplished by adding simple bequest language to your will - and you'll join others already part of *New Haven Leon: Presente!*

Whether you would like to put your donation to work today or benefit us after your lifetime, you can find a charitable plan that lets you provide for your family and support NHLSCP.

More information at newhavenleon.org on the Give page.



Clean efficient cook stoves help rural families:

- reduce indoor air pollution.
- save on wood.

And they help you offset your carbon emissions!

Donate now or learn more at newhavenleon.org Carbon Offset Fund



[New Haven/León Sister City Project](http://www.newhavenleon.org) works to promote social justice, education and sustainable development in Nicaragua and Connecticut. For more information see www.newhavenleon.org; www.facebook.com/newhavenleon; email nh@newhavenleon.org; or call 203.562.1607.

[Donate to expand NHLSCP's critical work here.](#)