



October 8, 2020

Dear friends,

As the U.S. election is already underway, we are reminded more than ever of the importance of “people to people” connections. Just as Nicaragua has grappled with a volatile political climate, human rights abuses, and an ongoing national health crisis, the U.S. is reeling with our own version of these same issues. We look to the examples of our Nicaraguan partners who show up daily to serve their communities in spite of limited resources and an uncertain future.

Support our Nicaraguan partners now by donating to our Covid-19 Emergency Fund.

Protecting Women in Nicaragua

Our partner organization, *Axyacatl*, an NGO supporting women fleeing domestic violence, has been sounding the alarm about the increase of abuse and *femicides* in recent months. Femicides, the killing of women and girls because of their gender, often go undocumented by the government, but Nicaraguan women’s groups had already reported at least 50 of these killings and 62 attempted femicides by August of this year. Recent brutal killings and sexual assaults of females of all ages, from young girls to an elderly woman, have ignited community outrage. Activists believe that the economic insecurity caused by the coronavirus pandemic, along with the lack of government protection, is contributing to this increase.

In this dangerous environment, *Axyacatl* continues to speak out against femicide, provide a safe harbor for at-risk women and families, and host

“CLOSED TO INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY”



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Freedom of expression and assembly? Right to life and physical integrity? Unfair trials. Forced migration. Violation of women’s & indigenous peoples’ rights. Amnesty International’s Nicaragua expert Lisa Konczal will share her most recent findings and analysis of the situation in Nicaragua.

SATURDAY OCT. 17TH, 7:30PM
LIVE ZOOM MEETING
REGISTER IN ADVANCE AT
PEACEWORKS.ORG OR
WRITE CINEMAUS@GMAIL.COM

PeaceWorks , 1125 Woolley Avenue. Union NJ 07083
917-301-6967, peaceworks.org

educational forums on girls' and women's rights. Their rural income generation projects provide some financial independence for women, increasing their ability to keep themselves and their families safe. Recent contributions from PeaceWorks have been used to provide COVID-19 supplies, as well as materials for chicken coops, animals, and bicycle carts to transport supplies and products to and from the market. This fall we would like to raise additional \$6000 to support Axyacatl's efforts to empower and protect Nicaraguan women.

Photos We Can't Ignore: Róger's Hands



Róger's hands.

The photograph is striking: the hands of an 8-year-old boy, Róger, whose young life has been defined by exploitation in Managua's Eastern Market. Together with his 10-year-old brother, they were subject to violence by the adults in their lives and forced to work day-in and day-out without an education or access to healthcare. The photo of his hands was taken on the day he and his brother had begun peeling plantains in the afternoon and ended at midnight. But this photo is not the end of this story.



Róger and his brother, although they must still work, now attend *Inhijambia's* Program for Street Kids, where they get nutritious food grown at *Inhijambia's* own farm, get their clothes washed, and get access to the beginnings of an education and basic healthcare. Someday soon, Roger may even get to celebrate his birthday, like the birthday girls at *Inhijambia* last month – also a photo we can't ignore!



Recently hatched turtles on the Juan Venado Island.

The turtles are thriving!

In the midst of all of the negative impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, our partners at the *Juan Venado* sea turtle conservation project are having great success. Already this year they have been able to protect 130 nests and hatch 2,023 turtle eggs, including eggs from the Hawksbill turtle which they hadn't seen for the last few years!

Safe Drinking Water

In spite of the pandemic, FEDICAMP continues their efforts to bring safe drinking water to people in rural communities. We've seen the successful new water system at *El Apante* and the "Turning on the Taps project" for school kids and families in *San Antonio*, now under construction with PeaceWorks' support. FEDICAMP Director Miguel Marin is excited to announce that they just completed another project at *Rio Abajo* (check out PeaceWorks' Facebook page for a video). And stay tuned—the community of *La Jabonera* is next!

In Memory: People-to-People Projects

We're sad to share that Bruce Klein passed away in July. Bruce and his wife Ellen Walsh made a spur of the moment decision to join our January 2020 delegation - a decision that changed a lot of lives. They were inspired by the people they met and came back from Nicaragua with plans to support projects in the rural countryside, including *El Porvenir* and the farming communities that work with FEDICAMP. While he is no longer with us, Bruce's dream is marching on: FEDICAMP's new water project in la Jabonera will be dedicated to his memory.



Bruce Klein (2nd from left) with FEDICAMP leadership in January 2020. A new water project will be dedicated in his honor.

We are also sad to share that Jim Virosco passed away in June. We spoke with his wife Shirley who told us that a chance meeting with Jim Burchell a couple of decades ago changed Jim's retirement plans. You see, Jim Virosco had a knack for finding great deals and free stuff for our humanitarian aid shipments. Among other donations, hundreds of kids in our partner communities have enjoyed the bikes that Jim fixed up after finding them in some church or garage sale. So, in his honor, we're dedicating our October shipment to Jim Virosco for his deep commitment to the spirit of PeaceWorks.

The October shipment is on!

Because of COVID-19 concerns, we had to cancel our May shipment, but we're sending a fully packed container to our partners later this month. Special thanks to DOVE Seton Hall, SOMOS Sports and PeaceWorks volunteers who came out last week to help us organize and pre-pack the donations. Everyone followed strict social distancing and safety guidelines as they packed and labelled medical equipment, school supplies, tools, bicycles, clothes, shoes, and housewares. With the economic devastation caused by the pandemic, these donations are needed more than ever! Please consider donating to help defray the \$10,000 cost of transporting the shipping container to Nicaragua.



Seton Hall "DOVE" volunteers helped pack donations in anticipation of our October 10th shipment day.

Ongoing COVID-19 crisis

In spite of little official news from the Nicaraguan government, the devastating health, social and economic impact of the pandemic continues. Just this month, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, reported that the pandemic is making the human rights situation more precarious in Nicaragua.

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Bachelet also noted that the UN and the Pan American Health Organization have to rely on COVID-19 data from unofficial sources within Nicaragua, as the government still “refuses to supply accurate and transparent information about cases and deaths.” There continue to be reports of secret burials and inaccurate death certificates, and activists say that the pandemic is having a negative impact on civil liberties. Bachelet has also expressed deep concern that international human rights experts not allowed to visit Nicaragua. Amnesty International describes Nicaragua as “closed to international scrutiny.”

Sat Oct 17th Zoom with Amnesty International

Please join us to take a deep dive into the situation of human rights in Nicaragua. At 7:30pm on Saturday, October 17th we’ll have a Zoom conversation with Amnesty International’s Lisa Konczal on the current human rights situation in Nicaragua. Lisa is a professor of sociology and criminology at Barry University in Miami, FL and the Nicaragua Country Specialist for Amnesty International, USA.

Be well, stay safe and we hope to see you on Zoom!

In Solidarity

Denis, Diane, John, Micha, Maggie, Susan, Marilyn and Guy
The PeaceWorks Board

I’d like to contribute to the emergency fund to keep our Nicaraguan partners safe and working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 \$250 \$500 \$1000 \$_____

I’d like to help offset the costs of the next humanitarian aid shipment this fall:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 \$250 \$500 \$1000 \$_____

I’d like to support Axayacatl’s work supporting women fleeing domestic violence:

\$50 \$75 \$100 \$150 \$250 \$500 \$1000 \$_____

