

Project Terrabona: Nicaragua – Ohio links

- History of a small nation to our south
- Solidarity in the 80's and 90's
- Present day Nicaragua
- My journey and work in Nicaragua – and links to Ted
- From Project Children's Health to Project Terrabona: Evolution of a Small Solidarity Project

Augusto Sandino, 1895-1934


- Primary goal: free Nicaragua from US intervention
- Extreme nationalist, not a socialist
- Army of 1000 workers and peasants fought guerilla war against marines, Sandino became national hero, 1926-33
- US foreign policy changed; defeated marines left Nica
- Negotiated peace agreement with president; after dinner he was assassinated by Somoza's national guard



Somoza coup

- President (dictator) of Nica 1937-47 and 1950-56
- Somoza took control of the country in 1937 and destroyed any potential armed resistance.
- The Somoza family ruled until 1979.





Nicaragua under Somoza

- Expansion of military with US assistance
- National Guard control of
 - radio, health and sanitation, postal service, customs, immigration, transportation
 - gambling, prostitution, smuggling, drugs
 - Massive bribery
- Press censorship



Resistance mounts

FSLN – Sandinistas

- Started by generation of 1959 and other students
- Most of the writings by Carlos Fonseca, who founded the Sandinista National Liberation Front
- Poor and hungry rural peasants, displaced from land by Somoza pro-export policies
- Displaced peasants living in urban slums
- Urban underground of student and workers opposed to political repression

Steps toward
Revolution:

Earthquake
Managua, 1972

- Killed 10,000; 300,000 homeless
- Donated international relief was sold; city never fully rebuilt
- Somoza declared state of emergency, seized complete control
- Tipping point for opposition to dictatorship



Sandinista Victory, 1979

- Broad-daylight attack on National Palace to stop US-Somoza negotiations for intervention
- Full-blown civil war, Sept 1978-July 1979
- Somoza resigned, fled to Miami
- 40-50,000 people died; 150,000 in Red Cross camps



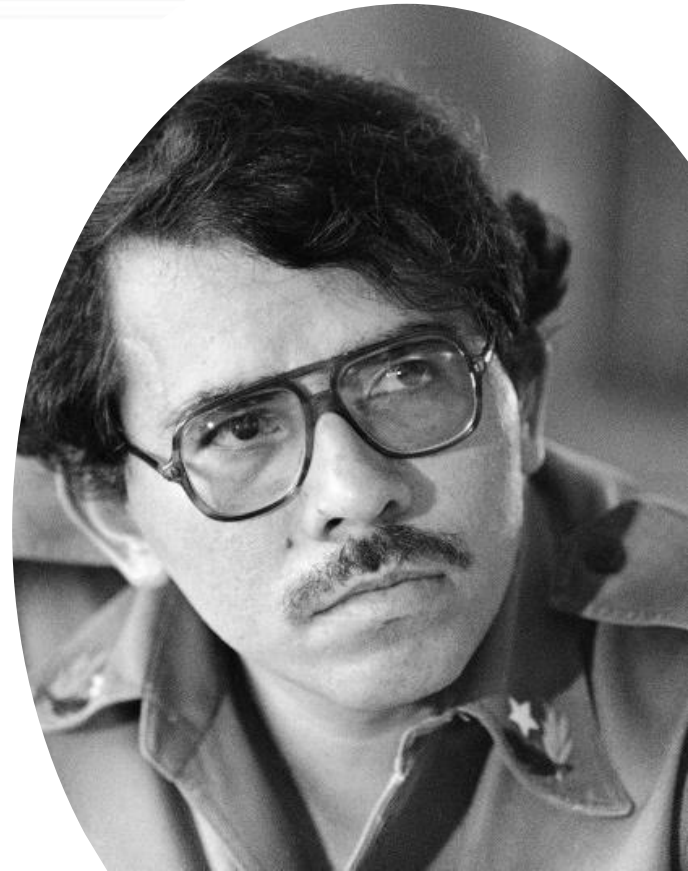
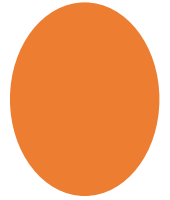
This picture of Commandante

Cerro made front page news

worldwide

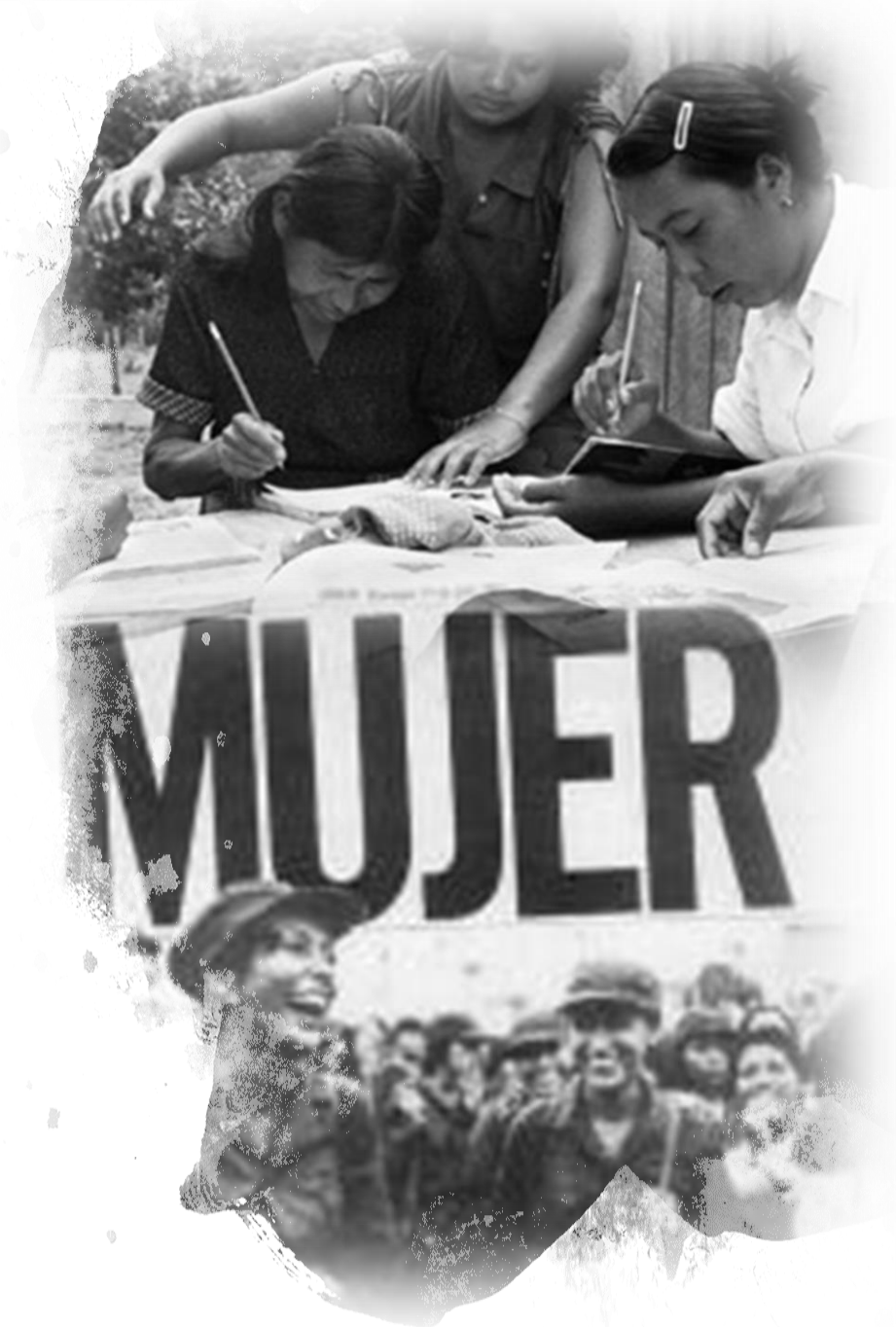
Sandinista Government

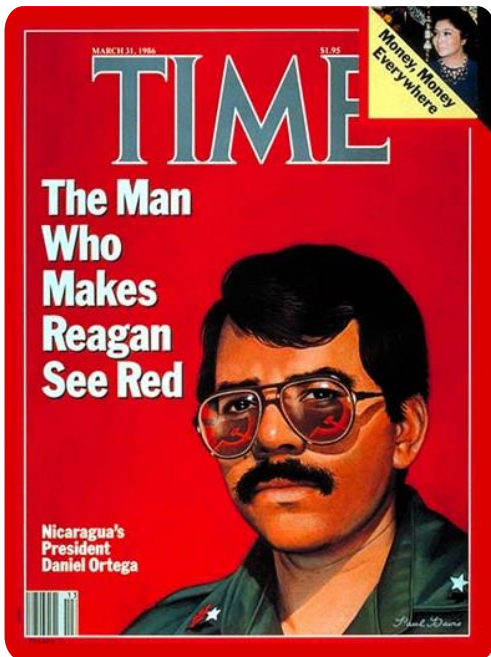
- July 19, 1979: 5 person junta rule cooperatively
- 1984: Election of Daniel Ortega
 - First fair multiparty election in Nicaragua's history
- Many foreign professionals – and the Sandalistas!



Sandinista reforms

- **Renegotiated foreign debt**
- **Rebuilt infrastructure**
- **Health care**
 - New hospitals and clinics
 - Preventative care
 - Vaccines – polio eradicated
- **Banking, insurance, and utilities nationalized**
- **Education**
 - National literacy program, with 60,000 volunteers, reducing illiteracy rate from 50.3% to 12.9% in 5 months
- **Land reform**
 - Somoza (and people who fled) land seized and made into cooperatives
 - Underused land confiscated and redistributed
 - Still, 60% land still private





1980 - Reagan Administration

- Funded CIA plan to support counter-revolutionaries (contras)
- Blocked international loans and aid
- Complete economic embargo, 1985



CONTRA AFFAIR

IT'S
HISTORY

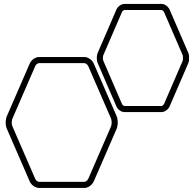
The Contra War

- Exiled Nicaraguans opposed to Sandinistas
- Based in Honduras
- Funded by the US via the CIA
- Gradually gained support from disillusioned Nicas
 - Miskito Indians
 - Business elites
 - Rural peasants who don't want cooperative farms
- Nicaragua spent 50% of budget fighting Contras (social programs halted, debt rose)

Oscar Arias and Peace Agreement, 1987

- Comprehensive regional peace plan
- Arias awarded Nobel Peace Prize, 1987





Election of 1990

- Nicaraguan economy suffers from Contra war
- Unfulfilled promises
- Unpopular draft
- Shortage of food and basic supplies
- Belief that US will not withdraw if Sandinistas are in power
- Election of Conservative Violetta Chamorro
- Peaceful transfer of power

***Neoliberal Nicaragua
1990 - 2006***





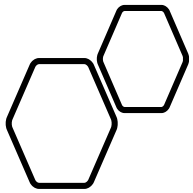
2006, 2011, 2016: Daniel Ortega is elected president again.....and again.....

2006: Nicaragua becomes one of five countries in the world where abortion is illegal with no exceptions.

2014: Constitution changes to allow third term in office.

Economic growth is strong and tourism grows.

The Nicaragua Canal was an issue of public debate and some controversy.



Elections

2011

Daniel Ortega wins again

Better? - more health care funding

Worse? Sandinista party is no longer authentically revolutionary or socialist

Is Daniel just another Latin American caudillo? (a charismatic political-military strongman)

Many strong supporters of old-time Sandinismo leave the FSLN



2013



Accused: President Daniel Ortega is accused of strict one-party rule and of falling away from the ideals of the early Sandinistas.

Praised: Social programs benefit the poorest in the country, such as Zero Hunger, Zero Usury, and the new Operation Sweep to rid the country of dengue fever-spreading mosquitoes.

Nicaragua:

- *Growth rate of 5% in 2013 (second highest in Central America)*
- *Inflation at 3.79%*
- *Trade balance with the US is positive*
- *Public debt decreasing*

ORTEGA: GOOD OR BAD????

April 2018

- Protests and demonstrations against the Ortega government for:
 - Social security reform harming retirees
 - Increased taxation
 - Deals with China to build an environmentally destructive canal
 - Forest fires in the Indio Maíz nature reserve..and much more
- *Time for Daniel and Rosario to go!*





Government response: violence and repression

- Hundreds killed, tortured and disappeared, especially students
- Massive impacts on the country's economy
- Impact on the daily life of everyday people, especially the poor.

2018

The Blue and White opposition: coalition of opposition groups- students, retirees, businesses, organizations supporting social justice and human rights

Purpose: peaceful struggle for the departure of Ortega and Murillo and the construction of a free, just and democratic system.



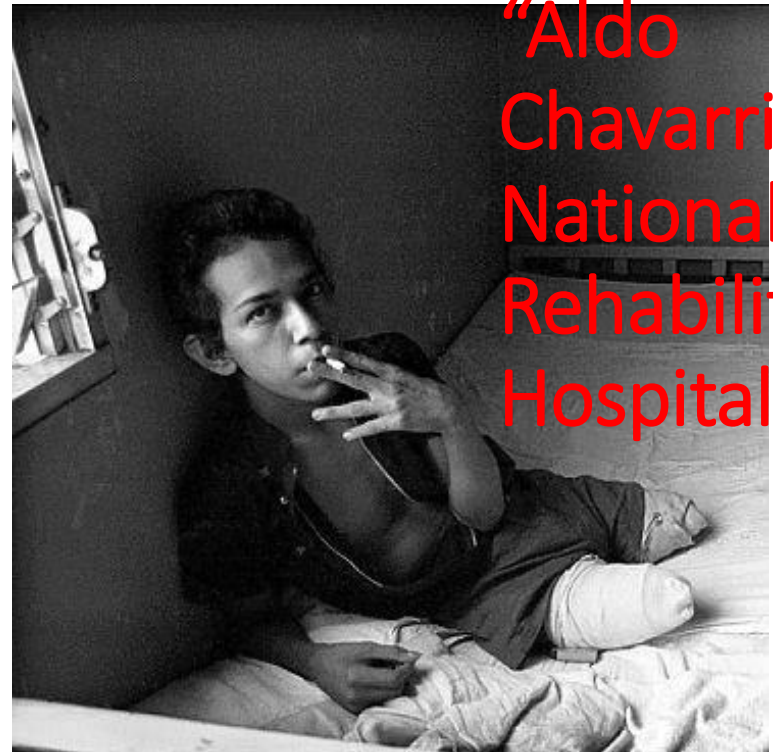
My Journey to Nicaragua

- **Nicaragua**
- 1988: Guest lecturer with the Nicaraguan Psychological Association
- Taught 8-week course in neuropsychology to professional psychologists at the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Managua
- Formed the Association of Neuropsychology in Nicaragua



1990-1992

- Resident neuropsychological consultant in Managua organized through the Association of Neuropsychology in Nicaragua.
- Teaching
- Clinical supervision
- Practical manual on neuropsychology
- 11 scientific presentations in Nicaragua, Honduras, Argentina, Ohio USA, England, Scotland, and South Africa.

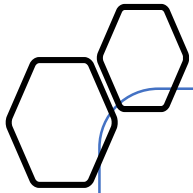


“Aldo Chavarria”
National
Rehabilitation
Hospital

University of Central America, Managua



Supervised theses of psychology students at the University of Central America



Barrio Walter Ferretti

Barrio Walter Ferretti
founded March 1989

- planned urban expansion on the southern edge of Managua.
- land was given to war disabled people and widows and orphans of Sandinista soldiers



Early projects



- - Installation of piped drinking water
- - Latrines
- - Sewage pipes
- - Nutrition for seriously underweight children
- - Electricity
- - Primary health care
- - Pre-school and primary education
- Health education (25 health promoters)



- Community Center of Barrio Walter Ferretti
- Health:
 - Health post
 - Primary health care for women and children
 - Sanitation campaigns
 - Training of health *brigadistas*
 - Soy kitchen
- Education
 - Primary school
 - Adult literacy and adult education
- Puppet theater for children

A folkloric dance program connects children with their cultural heritage

➡ The Beginning...
..1990's

Project Children's Health: Special Projects



Individual donation:
The food garden



Family foundation
grant: School repair
after Hurricane Mitch



Sewing project:
Suitcases of fabric and
sewing needles to help
start up training in
tailoring



Computers: donated
for the internet café

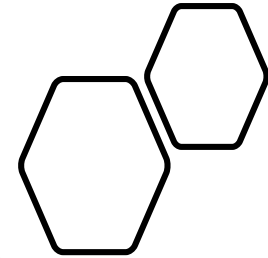


Guitar: to Gustavo
so he could instill
pride in cultural
heritage for teens.

Support

- Horizont 3000 (Austria)
- Habitat
- Plan Nicaragua
- American Jewish World Services
- **Project Children's Health
- *Milagro Foundation
- *Briehl Foundation
- *Jadetree Two Foundation
- *Direct Relief International

* We wrote these grants



- Santa Cruz Bailethon
- Two series of five house concerts

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports
- Youth Office of Managua City Hall

2007

Hurricane Felix:

- Category 5 storm with 160 mph winds, 50 days of rains, floods
- 80% of schools in the northeast lost their roofs
- 80% of 10,000 homes were destroyed
- Fishers out at sea were lost



Barrio Walter Ferretti:

Young people organized an event complete with music, folkloric dancing and food to collect money as well as grains, clothing, shoes, and purified water to send to the victims of Felix.



Ministry of Health establishes a health post nearby, so the Health Clinic focuses on preventive health and vaccines.

Focus on the school - Why is the school so important?



Vocational
training
(unavailable in
state run schools)



Having skills to earn
a living is essential
for young people and
a major part of the
fight against drugs,
crime and

hopelessness.
Work with youth on self-esteem, sexual
rights and responsibilities, and
domestic violence

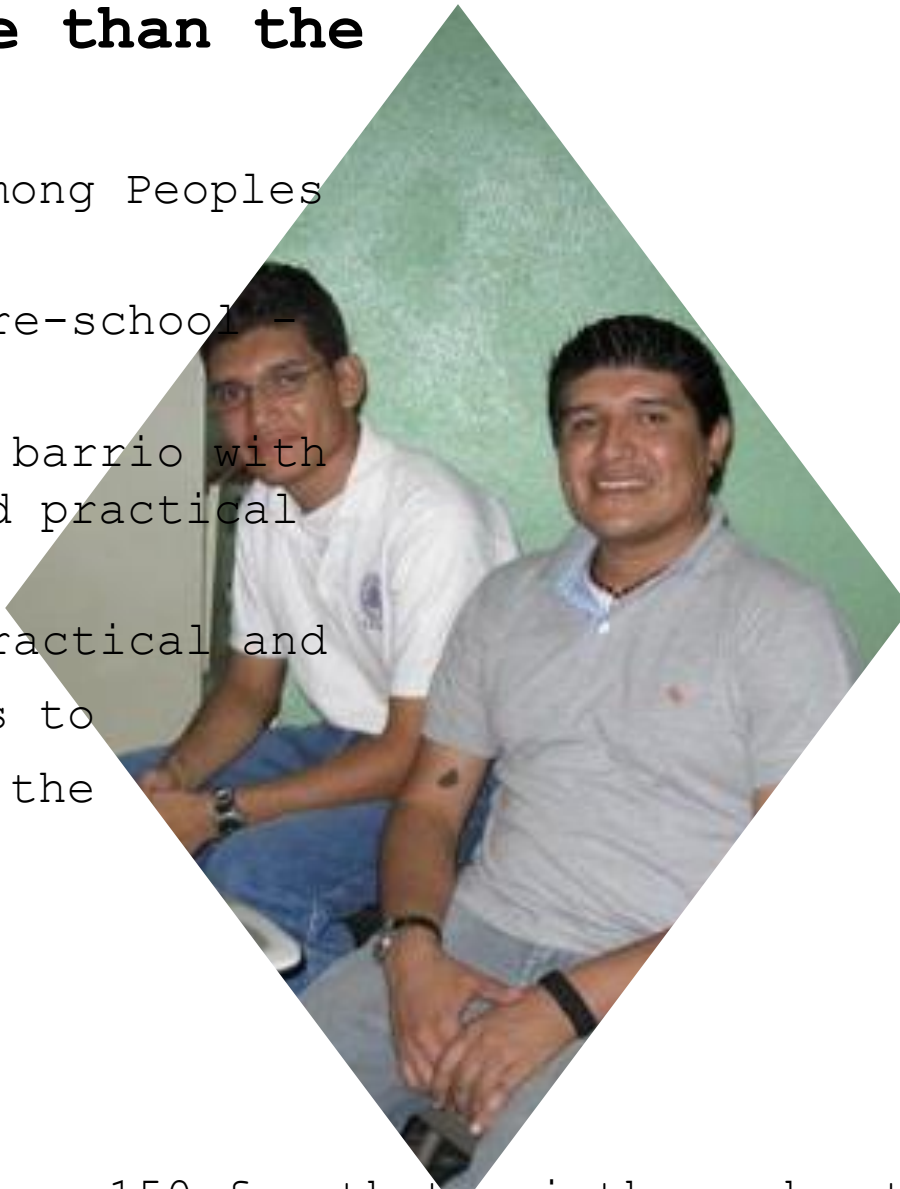


The barrio has less violence, fewer drugs and
gangs, and fewer health crises than neighboring
barrios.

Learning more than the ABC's

The Solidarity Among Peoples School:

- 373 students pre-school – sixth grade
- Only school in barrio with both formal and practical education
- “Abc’s” plus practical and technical skills to prepare them for the workplace



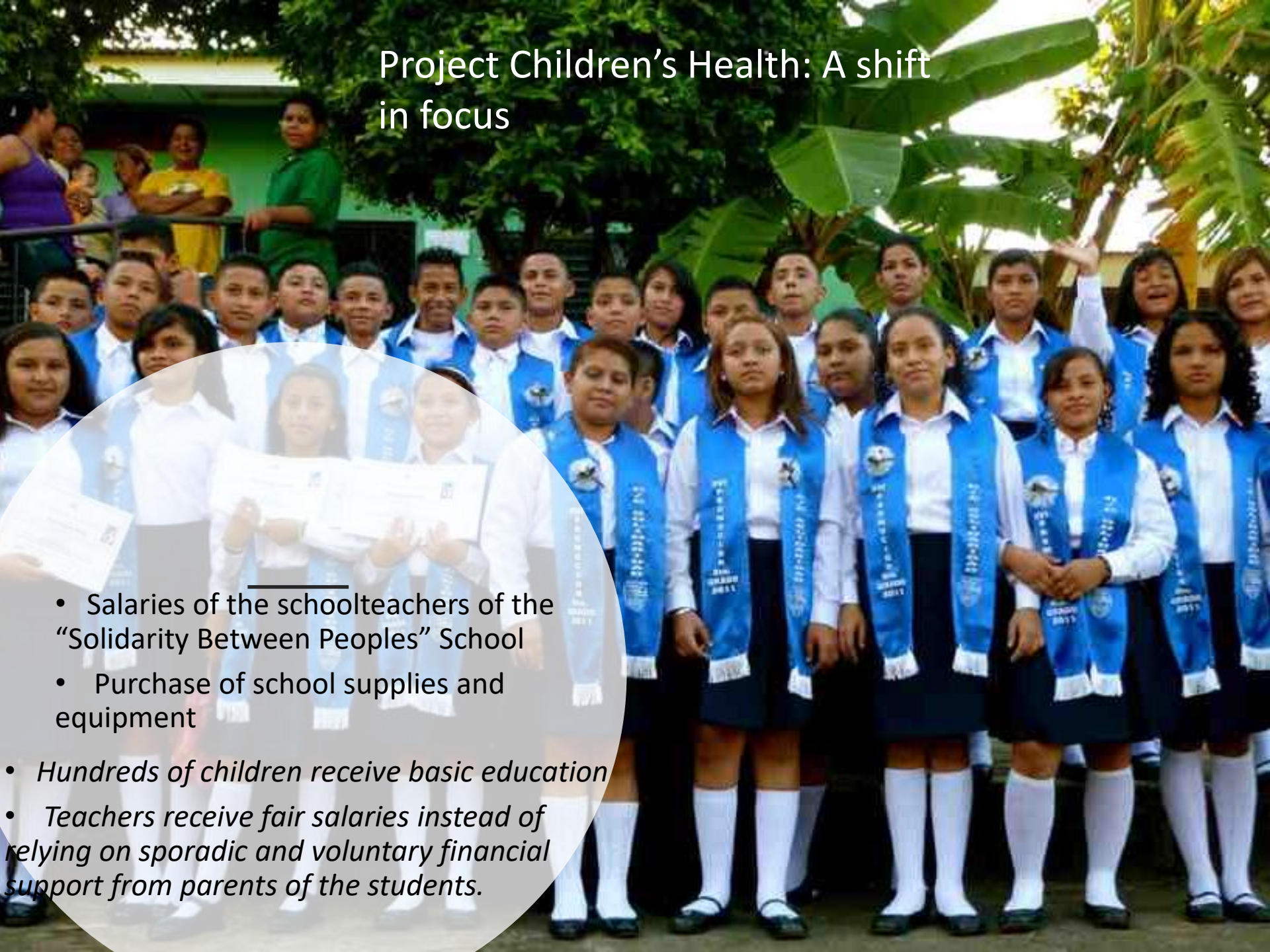
- Computer Center: 150 fourth to sixth grade students get computer training
- 7 computers and Internet access



- **Fourth grade:** learn handicrafts to sell in the local markets
- **Fifth grade:** training in tailoring and how to use a sewing machine and make patterns for skirts and blouses
- **Sixth grade:** training in confectionery and making baked goods

Project Children's Health: A shift in focus

- Salaries of the schoolteachers of the “Solidarity Between Peoples” School
- Purchase of school supplies and equipment
- *Hundreds of children receive basic education*
- *Teachers receive fair salaries instead of relying on sporadic and voluntary financial support from parents of the students.*



“Solidarity Between Peoples” School

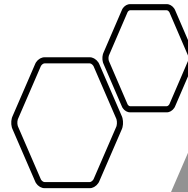
Since the school began in 1996 through 2012:

- 447 five-year-olds graduated from pre-school
- 530 students graduated from primary school (258 girls and 272 boys)

12 teachers (7 women and 5 men)

- All have certificates from the Ministry of Education to teach primary school
- 3 teachers have advanced training (licenses in the science of education).





Project Evaluation

Professional Audit: Jan 2008 to March 2009

The auditors were entirely satisfied that the funds donated for Project Children's Health were being used properly. The purpose of an "accompaniment audit" is to identify weak points and help the organization become even stronger. The auditors were able to point out some weaknesses in the financial administration and discuss with AMUCOBU some useful recommendations for improved ways of handling contracts, social security payments, and managing the cash. We expect the consultation to improve the professional quality of the financial management of AMUCOBU.

PROJECT TERRABONA HEALTH

a project of IF

2014



More big changes!!

- Back to supporting health care
- A new fiscal sponsor in the USA

We now support former AMUCOBU nurse Jader Loaisiga with his work in rural Nicaragua.

Jader now provides preventive and public health care in the village of San Jose de Terrabona and surrounding settlements.

Jader's Story

Born in Managua May 10, 1965, the 4th of 8 children.

- *I grew up in a very close family. I have never left my parents except when I was in the Nicaraguan army in the 1980's.*
- *In those years, we had compulsory military service and I was called up for four years. ...The army sent me to Cuba for training in parachuting, tactics, engineering, physics, mine de-activation, diving and other subjects too.*



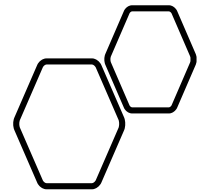
Jader's Story

I saw that many of my companions had died in combat for lack of medical personnel. Sometimes the medic was killed in combat and there was no one else to treat the wounds, or sometimes, because we were way up in the mountain zones of Nicaragua, the helicopters could not land due to fog or because of fear of being ambushed. Then the injured soldier might bleed and die.

I reflected on these moments and I thought: if only I could be of help or know what to do to avoid deaths, and really, this is what motivated me to study the profession of nursing – to save lives.



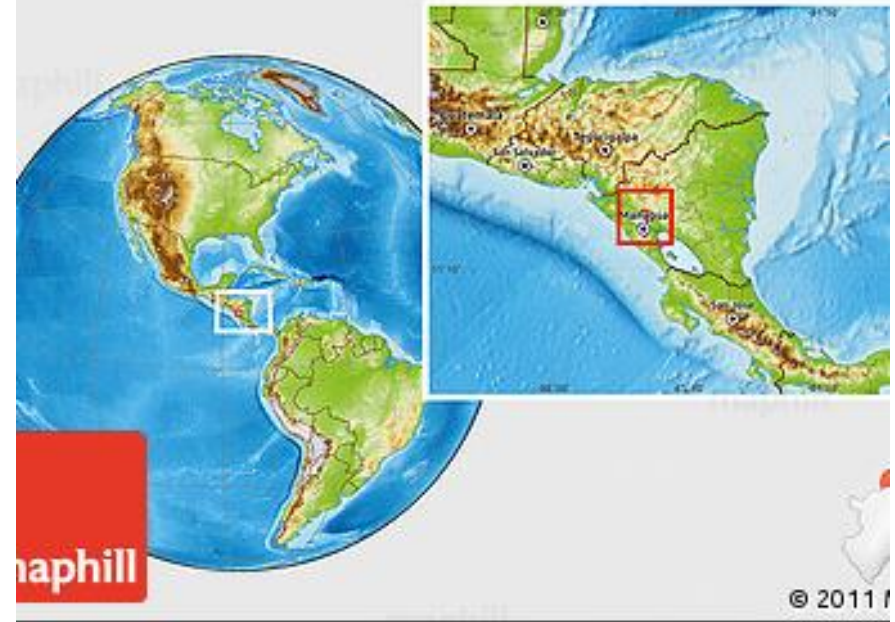
My experiences helped me adapt to being in any type of terrain and above all inspired me to help those most vulnerable and serve them, providing health care since this is always a serious need for our people.



2015

San Francisco Libre: 50 miles north of Managua, bounded by Lake Managua to the south and near the beautiful Momotombo volcano.

San Francisco Libre 
Managua, Nicaragua



From Terrabona to
San Francisco Libre

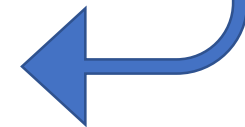
A short move to a municipality with
health resources to support Jader's
work: MINSA

2015

Jader works in the rural villages in the region

Headquarters: Health post of San Roque

Close to Managua in miles, but roads are sometimes impassable, and most people cannot afford to travel for health care, so local health services are essential.



Russell visits San Roque

Visiting the clinic:

- Four hours on foot
- An hour or two if you are lucky enough to have a horse or mule

Nearest small hospital: 12 miles away

- Taxi from elsewhere for \$10 – that's three days wages if you're poor – so sometimes, sick patients just have to wait for the bus.

2016



A mother bringing her daughter to the clinic on horseback.

2017



My first impression:

- **Small:** two rooms - one is divided into a small reception area and a consultation room, and the other into a closet of a pharmacy and another consultation room.
- **Ill-equipped:**
 - No running water
 - No toilet

Imagine a patient with acute diarrhea stumbling to the latrines out back and having to use unsanitary water from a public well to wash up!



2018

Jader's early report of government violence:

- *"I hope all is well with you all. Here in Nicaragua we are living a powerful chaos. The police and anti-riot squads have attacked the poor students and civil society, only because they demanded their rights and objected to reforms in social security....Sadly blood is running in our land and the government only 'calms' the situation with anti-riot squads."*



2018

CALL: Emotional and psychological trauma

- Elderly people, with insomnia, anxiety, and even amnesia
- Families worried about relatives who worked for the state or children studying in affected universities

RESPONSE:

Health day focused on both medical and psychological needs

- Follow-up visits to the families show reduced anxiety as the violence and repression have become more selective



**Special Grant from IF - \$1,000:
Health, Nutrition and Food for
Children of San Roque and
Surrounding Communities**

- 25 malnourished children and 6 malnourished pregnant women received soy milk and garden-grown vegetables
- All of the children gained weight
- The mothers of the children and the pregnant women all learned about healthy eating for their families
- People saw the benefits of starting their own family gardens

2019



FAMILY GARDEN PROJECT

2019

Report from Jader Loaisiga

We created a small family garden with edible plants to supplement the soymilk and plants for use in natural medicine. Watermelon, honeydew, peppers, tomatoes, pipian [a Nicaraguan squash], and more!

Some parents helped with cleaning and care of the gardening tools, in gratitude for the fruits and vegetables eaten by their children.



Some people volunteered and brought other plants including plátanos, bananas, malangas, and other fruits.

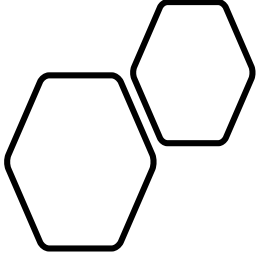


The family garden is a really important and sustainable way for people to grow fruits and vegetables for their own consumption. We help people understand that with conservation and good maintenance, they can reap both food and medicine today and in the future.





2020



Susana
wants to
start a
community
garden with
a group of
local
women

Resources

- *The History of Nicaragua* by Clifford Staten
- *Land, Power, and Poverty* by Charles Brockett
- *The Country Under My Skin* by Giaconda Belli

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/oct/18/nicaragua-amnesty-international-police-killings-daniel-ortega>

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/07/nicaragua-repression-estatal-ha-llegado-a-niveles-deplorables/> : Nicaragua: State repression has reached deplorable levels (July 2018)

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/nicaragua/> (October 2018)

<http://www.envio.org.ni/index.en>

<https://nacla.org>

<https://www.hhrjournal.org/2018/08/side-effects-persecution-of-health-workers-in-nicaragua/>

One of my personal favorites: <https://havanatimes.org/?p=139141>

How could you connect to this project?

Financial donation: The annual budget of Project Terrabona in 2020 is \$6,525. The funds come from an annual newsletter and appeal that I send to a small group of donors. The project operates on a shoe string most years, and my friend Russell, who helps coordinate the project, and I make up the shortfall. We also fund special projects and send Jader a birthday present every May 10. We could do so much more with additional funds.

Help with the annual newsletter: I write the newsletter on my own, but I am no expert in this! It would be great to have help with the writing, the design, the layout, and just putting it together.

Visit: I visit every year or so, and on occasion other donors have made a visit. It's a little tricky – you need to speak Spanish and be willing to manage heat and rough conditions, but it's well worth it to see first hand how a small rural health clinic in a poor country operates.

Educational and fundraising event: We would absolutely welcome other fundraising events. They are wonderful because not only do they raise needed money for the project, they also provide an opportunity for those attending to learn about life in this corner of the world and the work that is being done thanks to their contributions.

Come to a house concert! God and Covid willing, I'll be hosting two fundraising house concerts up in Rocky River this October with a wonderful British singer songwriter.

jwinegardner7@gmail.com