

As of July first, the Fair Trade Zone (the Women's Sewing Cooperative) is finally, officially, a free trade zone business! What does this mean?

- ◆ Exports with no duty (but a ton more paperwork).
- ◆ Imports with no duty (but again, more paperwork).
- ◆ Buying within the country with no 15% sales tax (but they are still waiting on the document that authorizes it).

So at the moment it is hard for them to see the positive aspects of the free trade zone status, except they are looking forward to not paying 30% of their profits in taxes.

They are history in the making, as the world's first and only worker-owned free trade zone. And as such, the DFID (British Foreign Aid) is providing the funds to publish a book documenting the women's progress and the advantages of cooperativism. Hopefully with this book, the Fair Trade Zone will be the first but **not** the only worker-owned free trade zone.

To receive free trade zone status the women had to have an office apart from us. With having a totally separate office comes more independence. With more independence come more mistakes and opportunities to learn. Sometimes they succeed in operating more independently and sometimes not.

For clothing information & suppliers:
www.FairTradeZone.jhc-cdca.org
www.maggiesorganics.com
www.pcusa.org/enough
www.ethicalgoods.com
 email NACCP at CyndeH@aol.com

garments for Maggie's. Plus, they have additional orders in organics as well as conventional clothing. If you want small amounts of t-shirts, you can order one or more from North Anderson Community Church (NACCP).

Although it's frustrating as crises arise in the day-to-day grind – progress **is** being made. And independence, though not around the corner, is a possibility.

Organic cotton growers in Guatemala, El Salvador, and here in Nicaragua are anxiously awaiting the spinning plant. The Fair Trade Zone waits as well, in order to have a steady flow of cloth.

The hold-up is money – no surprise there! After three months of waiting to hear if the insurance company will guarantee the IADB (Inter-American Development Bank) loan, we heard that they would not guarantee it. The IADB will provide the women \$765,000, partly as a grant and mostly as a loan, but they wanted the non-profit JHC/CDCA to guarantee the loan, which we cannot do. We cannot put our other projects at risk. So keep this in your thoughts and prayers. Or if you know a wealthy source who is justice-oriented and might be willing to make the loan or co-sign for it... or better yet, a source for \$1.6 million in a grant, please let us know.

For coffee & organic food suppliers:
www.buildingnewhope.com
www.their-buckscoffee.com
www.onceagainnutbutter.com
www.riococobeans.com
www.bumblebar.com
www.larrysbeans.com

COPROEXNIC, the Organic Crops Cooperative, is looking at a good year. Major exports will be sesame, peanuts, and coffee. We have a larger market for coffee than El Porvenir can supply so we are negotiating with other poor coffee growers. Please support our organic crops by buying them through Once Again Nut Butter, Bumble Bar, Their-Bucks Coffee, Building New Hope, Rio Coco Beans, and Larry's Beans.



El Porvenir will also have a good coffee crop this year. So far this year, El Porvenir has received three medical teams and one dental team from our volunteers.

The cooperative has also hosted our individual volunteers. Volunteers have gone up for one to three weeks in groups of two or three at a time. They taught English to high school students and conversational English at night to children and adults. Volunteers have worked on constructing a rainwater catch pool, swept the dirt yards, harvested beans, made tortillas and friends. It has been a wonderful experience for the volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, we have had 15 individual

volunteers since May!! They have had the privilege of having Abby as their coordinator, who has helped them congeal as an ever-changing group. Besides El Porvenir, they have done construction here worked in the health clinic, interviewed the women and helped in various other tasks. They've had lots of fun, too.

Volunteers helped create different samples of concrete block for the Concrete Construction Materials

Cooperative. The cooperative may receive a boon from the new Ciudad Sandino mayor. He is working with the European Union building and refurbishing houses. Our cooperative may receive a large contract for this.



The health clinic is anticipating some rough times due to the increase in medicine costs, because of the passage of CAFTA (Central America Free Trade Agreement) in the States. We continue to hope against hope that Nicaragua will not ratify it. If Nicaragua does pass it, then we will need more medicine contributions (both cash and in-kind) and we will need an herbalist.

The **Bucknell Brigade's** efforts this past year were phenomenal and have helped us financially in the "slow time" of the year. Volunteers helped staff the clinic, wrote a pharmaceutical manual, saw patients, as well as continued construction projects.

In May the **Presbyterian Campus Ministries group from around Raleigh, NC,** helped with construction at the clinic and at the women's sewing cooperative. In June and July, **St. John's Methodist Church of Rock Hill, SC,** came and held dental clinics in Nueva Vida as well as El Porvenir.



photo: Risher Brabham



Bucknell University had a 3-week class here. It was the first time a for-credit class has happened at the CDCA. They went into homes to collect information about child malnutrition in Nueva Vida. It was a good experience for the students and we learned lots about the difficulty of cross-culture surveys. Our experience also makes us wonder about the accuracy of other surveys. What *we* take for granted as easily answerable questions (e.g., "how many are living in this house?" "how old is this child?") are not easy questions for extremely poor people. Time is not fixed for them – one day, or month, or year is the same desperation. They don't have clocks or calendars. The number of people in the home fluctuates as family members come and go needing places to stay. Putting scales on uneven, dirt floors yields inconsistent weights. No place to lay babies down yields inconsistent heights.

So though the data was collected and analyzed by the class, our conclusion here is that we learned a lot. Surveys need to take months and a few very meticulous people with a deep understanding of the culture to make it work. I don't think we fall into the "very meticulous" category! ☺



JUBILEE HOUSE COMMUNITY
 "You shall not oppress one another for I am the Lord your God." —Lev. 25:17

The Jubilee House Community: The **children** started their new school year on 1 September. They had fun visiting with family and friends in the States after enjoying the visit of friends Nick and Josh here for six weeks.

Mike and **Kathleen**, while in the States, bought a new van for the speaking tours and sold the old, dear one. **Pat** and **Kathy** will not be using it this year because they are speaking on the West Coast starting 23 September.

They and **Sarah** had to endure major plumbing repairs to the Center's house while the others were gone . . . gross repairs. Sarah found time to create home-office space in the house and paint Joseph's bunk bed with planets, stars, and spaceships.

We are enjoying watching Becca grow with baby. She and Paul hope to be in their straw-bale house in September. (By the way, the spinning plant will probably be straw-bale.)

| Center for Development in Central America | | |
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Reflection...

Going back to the town where I went to college caused many memories to come flooding back. So many memories revolved around how my eyes were opened by professors extraordinaire and aware students.

I remember taking an interim course on Black Awareness. *I remember* there being two white students, the white professor, and the rest Black students. Almost the whole Black student body was in the class.

These students opened my eyes in so many ways – eyes that I thought were already opened growing up during the civil rights movement as I did. I remember asking why Erskine had so few Black students. The answer was multi-faceted, but one part was that Erskine had no Black professors.



photo: Emily Jerszyk

I, of course, would have known that *if* I had thought about it, but it had not even crossed my mind. What a shocker!

Looking back on my life I've been blessed to have people open my eyes . . . to teach me . . . to move me from one place to another. But I also realize I've put myself in their hands. I signed up for the course. I came to Nicaragua during the war. I chose to live with the poor.

This, I believe, is the responsibility of privileged people. To put themselves in positions/environments to have their eyes opened. Because it is too easy to move within the world of privilege and not see the pain, the poor, the bigotry, the evil existing day-to-day for the vast majority of the world.

The Privileged's Prayer could be:

Open my eyes that I may see
 Glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.
 Open my eyes, illumine me,
 Spirit divine.

– Kathleen

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For a minimum gift of \$25.00, you may request *Grits, Greens, and Gallo Pinto*, our unique and versatile cookbook.

For a minimum gift of \$50.00, our hand-thrown mug. Please specify right- or left-handed. Allow 6 weeks for delivery.

Please send any gift designation, cookbook or mug requests via **emailto: jhc@jhc-cdca.org**

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