Worldwide families suffer because of international policies - especially here in Nicaragua.

Much of the international news regarding Nicaragua’s state of civil unrest is skewed, in part because international journalists do not come and stay to research in-depth what is going on in Nicaragua. This is not new to Nicaraguans, rather it has been reality for much of their nation’s history. We try to give a balanced version of what we experience, though many outside and inside of Nicaragua disagree with us. What we can tell you is that the sanctions imposed by the United States, the high travel alert by the U.S. State Department, and all the rhetoric hurts families who live in poverty. The Center for Development in Central America is continuing to serve those families with your help.

News in brief:

With the sanctions imposed through the NICA Act:
- food prices are rising;
- certain medications are more limited;
- some government officials are sanctioned, meaning they can’t sign agreements with international organizations; for example, the Minister of Health cannot currently sign an agreement with the World Health Organization, etc.

With the high travel alert* for Nicaragua posted by the U.S. State Department, tourism, foreign investments, and loans that have aided Nicaragua now are more limited which means:
  * unemployment remains high;
  * for the first time in decades, cooperatives are being taxed (like our organic agriculture cooperative);
  * credits for farmers to plant are less available as banks are hesitant to invest; and
  * imports and exports are taxed higher.

*Recently, Andrés Pérez Baltodano resigned from the editorial board of Confidencial, a national publication that heavily leans in favor of the opposition to the current Nicaraguan government. In an open letter, he said that despite his own opinions of opposing the government, he believed that journalism should be investigative not the creator of “facts.”

September 2019
In an effort to keep the peace in the country, the government has taken these actions:

- passed a general amnesty law, which includes all who fled Nicaragua during the unrest in 2018 and this year;
- released all “political” prisoners, although the opposition claims that a number of current detainees are political prisoners;
- allowed the Red Cross into the prisons before releasing the prisoners to see their conditions and verify how many prisoners were being held (they found no evidence of torture or unfair treatment after talking to the prisoners); and
- when current demonstrations happen, if a permit is not obtained, the protestors are arrested but usually released the same day. If a permit is denied, the police report of why it was denied is published in a press release.

In other news:

- Tourism is beginning to pick back up as other nations lower their travel alerts and international visitors see that Nicaragua is calm;
- Tourism is beginning to pick back up as other nations lower their travel alerts and international visitors see that Nicaragua is calm;
- Nicaragua has the second lowest rate of homicides in Latin America…it dropped from 12 / 1,000,000 in 2018 to 8.3 so far in 2019, which is incredible because Nicaragua borders Honduras which has one of the highest homicide rates in the world;
- New public parks are opening including one in Ciudad Sandino, two huge over/under passes were opened in Managua, a new highway connecting the east and west coasts of Nicaragua opened, and there is again free WiFi in all the parks.\(^2\)
- And the nation celebrated the 40\(^{th}\) anniversary of the Triumph of the Revolution,\(^3\) with hundreds of thousands of people crowding into the Plaza de La Fe … people spilling over into the streets and parks to celebrate. The president, the vice-president, the cabinet, etc., were all seated on an open stage for the celebration.

Water is in two rural communities…576 homes… thanks to the Sunrise Rotary Club of Santa Barbara, CA, and other Clubs, our local Ciudad Sandino Club, the folks in the communities (who’ve worked more than 20,000 hours), and work of the CDCA staff. For eight years this project has been in the making… coordinating different engineering plans, organizing work

\(^2\) The World Bank recently published their findings that Nicaragua has the best execution of their portfolio of projects…such as roads, hospitals…infrastructure.

\(^3\) In Nicaragua the 19\(^{th}\) of July 1979 is known as the Triumph of the Revolution. After decades of brutal dictatorship of the Somoza family, rebellion broke out and following many bloody years of war, the Sandinista revolution was realized when President Anastasio Somoza fled the country (taking with him the national treasury).
brigades to dig ditches for 21.4 kilometers (over 13 miles) of piping, meeting with the local mayor’s office and the national water company, etc. The Santa Barbara Sunrise Club came to participate and celebrate the project’s inauguration in August. It has been a long process but water is flowing!!!

Do you belong to a Rotary or other civic club? If the CDCA was in your budget for as little as $100 a year or you held a fund-raiser annually, think of the good work that could be done... like this water project! We have huge projects waiting for funding to better people’s lives.

The **Nueva Vida Clinic** is celebrating 20 years in operation! During those 20 years,
- 160,084 patients have been seen and treated for 329,253 diseases and conditions;
- 39,135 patients have received dental care and had 52,895 procedures done;
- and since 2014, 2,902 people have had vision checks and received 3,841 pairs of eye glasses.
- Our laboratory continues to serve thousands of people a year.
- Even though our therapist, Pat, died in December, we continue to offer therapy with our volunteer therapist, Dr. Dominga Soto.
- Our public health outreach is thriving and providing vital services and information. Since 2011, we have provided 924 classes on birth, pregnancy, breast feeding, nutrition, and support groups for 10,147 participants.

We have a new used ultrasound machine thanks to Dr. Pedro Cordero and Mano a Mano, and Peaceworks who shipped it. The clinic’s radiologist, Dr. Flores, is again performing ultrasounds as well as general exams.

**Josefa**, the clinic’s administrator, is helping patients who do not have birth certificates to obtain them. It is unbelievable how many poor people do not have a record of their birth, which means they are forever out of the social service system. It is like a United States citizen not having a social security number. Josefa works as administrator for the clinic and has taken the role of social worker helping patients get government help... such as with food aid, with the certificates, and identification cards.

The support groups continue… New Mothers received bags filled with...
baby gifts donated by friends Nora and Becky. Andrea, the volunteer coordinator, and Danelia, the pharmacy aide, are teaching the pre-teen and teen girls’ group, Las Lobas (She-Wolves), crocheting to increase motor skills. Andrea and Emir, one of the social work interns, are working with the boys’ group, Los Leones (The Lions), to instill self-control.

The 35 lay health promoters from their homes continue to aid patients with first aid kits…over 4,000 so far this year for wound care, nebulizing, checking blood pressures and blood sugars, etc. They also have gone with our doctor on visits to the patients’ homes…almost 500 home visits in 2019.

Most are patients with type 2 diabetes and the elderly; others are children, babies, pregnant moms, and patients at risk. They have found patients with blood sugars that are higher than our glucometers can read… over 500! These patients are sent to the hospital right away. The promoters have learned how to care for diabetic feet and legs in hopes that patients can keep their limbs. We give these 35 lay promoters under $20/month as a thank you for their work… if you would like to support them, then pledge $20 a month for one promoter… it would help immensely.

All this work is done by Nicaraguans. With the clinic staff, amazing work continues even as we pinch and save to keep costs down. The interns and volunteers play a vital role in the work. A new nursing intern is easing the burden of Isamar, the one paid nurse who does PAPs, EKGs, putting in IUDs and birth control implants, as well as giving injections, checking in patients, etc. etc. etc.

For the past year, we also had the help of Dr. Acuna who came weekly, treating 5-8 adult dental patients.

El Porvenir, the remote organic coffee cooperative, depends on international doctors and dentists for their care. Drs. Dirk and Heather from Rock Hill, SC, went with a lay hygienist, Ginger, to clean teeth and extract infected teeth. They saw 35 people up there in a day and a half. They have been the only dentists who have come in the past year. So far in 2019, El Porvenir has had no doctors, as international volunteers delegations are not yet coming back to Nicaragua.

Nurse Alan volunteered for a couple of days going into homes and helping in the pharmacy. He is trying to help organize a medical delegation, building on his experiences with our clinic staff.

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4Nicaragua is at yellow alert for dengue fever, so monitoring patients is as crucial as ever, to ensure that people do not die. Malnourished patients and people unmonitored for hemorrhagic dengue are at extremely high risk.
COPROEXNIC, the organic agriculture cooperative, is expanding their grower base with more farmers in sesame. We anticipate that the first part of the rainy season will yield good crops of sesame. Soon the product will be going for processing to the sesame plant, which is under the direction of a new manager. This first part is a shorter growing cycle.

Planting sesame and peanuts is underway for the second part of the rainy season. We hope and pray we have good rains. Listening to farmers explain how they plant is overwhelming… preparing the land, planting, weeding, and harvesting. Sesame is planted by hand. Harvesting sesame requires seasonal workers that the farmers have to have credit to pay.

Coffee production is also a hard life. With climate change, Nicaraguan coffee is being affected by the warmer temperatures. Mike, Paul and our U.S. lawyer and Board member, Steve Virgil, went to visit a number of organic coffee cooperatives to talk with them about marketing their coffee.

As Their-Bucks Coffee continues to handle El Porvenir organic coffee, Steve has started an initiative to direct market El Porvenir coffee and, in the future, coffee from more growers. To purchase coffee by the pound, or sign up for a monthly subscription, please check out the new coffee website farmershares.com as well as their-buckscoffee.com.

COPROEXNIC has been working toward starting a peanut processing plant. There were hopes that it would begin this November but that is not going to be the case. Currently the cooperative is working with the peanut processor that we have used the last few years and growing more peanuts so that the processor can keep working. Not as many conventional peanuts are being grown this season because of lack of credit from banks that are hesitant to invest in a country they deem is unstable.

Fortunately, we have businesses like Nuts to You (nutstoyou.com) and Once Again Nut Butter (onceagainnutbutter.com), who have invested capital for COPROEXNIC organic farmers. Check out their websites and buy their products to help Nicaraguan farmers.
Casa Ben Linder hosted events such as the Bolivian embassy dinner, as well as a gathering of three delegations on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the Triumph of the Revolution. The gathering was to launch the book, *Live from Nicaragua*, by more than 20 contributors.

CBL continues to host art classes and puppet shows.

The costs of operating Casa Ben Linder are breaking even with the events and people staying in the rooms overnight, but not covering the interest on the loans that were given to renovate the place. There were many costs incurred in the legalization of the facility. We need about $5,000 to finish two more bedrooms in order to bring in more income. As tourism is picking back up in Nicaragua, we are hoping that the facility will not only cover its costs but also eventually bring income into the projects of the CDCA.

JHCommunity:

Samantha, the youngest member of our intentional community, turned one year old on August the 24th. She is walking some and is the pride and joy of her parents, Claudia and Daniel (and the rest of us doting folks!).

We all enjoyed having Joseph home after his college graduation from Bennington and many of us went to see the boy receive his diploma. His love, Alex, came to visit him here in Nicaragua and joined our anniversary delegation. Now they are off to New York City to start their careers.

Also joining the anniversary delegation were

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daughter Jessica and her two children, Elliot and Charlotte; friends Nora, Becky and their children Alex, Nick and Nicole; and friends Linda, Paul, Sharon and Scott. We shared how the work and Nicaragua have changed over the 25 years we have been in Nicaragua.

Paul, Becca, Eibhlín and Orla especially enjoyed having Paul’s brother Brian and his family from Germany visiting with them here in Nicaragua. Becca will be speaking in the U.S. Northwest in October… her family is going with her. Look here for updates on her schedule:

finance an engineering study to address the grey and black water crisis in Nueva Vida; and funding for the CDCA.

Long time board member, Jim Brown, resigned due to health issues. For 25 years, Jim has been an active volunteer and helped us stay in contact with interested people with his phone service. Thank you, Jim, from the bottom of our hearts!!!

We welcome new Board members: Dr. Paul Susman, Bucknell; Dr. Megan Quinn, East Tennessee State University; Jorge Rivas, Nicaraguan engineer; and Lila Bermúdez, one of our Nicaraguan lawyers.

**REFLECTION:**

Our intentional community meets weekly to go over the CDCA’s finances, to see whether we are going to be able to pay the bills, pay staff, buy medicines and supplies, and so forth. So many times, at the beginning of the month we wonder if this month will be the time that we have to make hard choices regarding what and who to pay… often we lie awake at night trying to problem solve, and for all of us it takes its toll…. And yet…

And yet, thus far, gifts and donations have come in to cover expenses… not enough to save for a rainy day… but enough to cover expenses.

I was a founding member of the Jubilee House Community back in 1979 with Mike and Sarah. For 40 years we have worked with the poor… in service that has run the gamut from North Carolina - housing folks who were in need of temporary shelter, street folks who became our friends, and battered women - to Nicaragua - planting sesame, building schools and

**https://jhc-cdca.org/how-to-help/upcoming-speaking-opportunities/**

During the Anniversary Delegation, the JHC Board of Directors met because four international members were in-country. From that meeting we are exploring solar energy for the projects of the CDCA and its offices; how to
health clinics, even running our own health clinic for 12,000 hurricane refugees.

For 40 years we have wondered, “where in the world would the money come from?”

And yet, it has come. We started providing shelter with only a church building…beds we found dumped on the side of the street, food given to us to can, freeze, or create meals of such weird concoction you cannot imagine! It wasn’t the best, but as the city inspector said, “I guess it is better than sleeping under a bridge.” As time went on, we upgraded…but we started with basically nothing; and when we left, the shelters, a soup kitchen, a Habitat for Humanity chapter, and a crisis line were on a sound foundation.

For 40 years the work that we felt we needed to do has gone on with just enough funding. We work hard to fundraise and have for 40 years now, and yet we rarely receive grants from foundations…the work we do is too strange to fit their criteria. We do not have 10-year plans because we do not know what the needs will be in 10 years…and yet again, for 40 years the donations and gifts have come in.

We are well aware: it is because of you that the work continues.

I believe also that the Divine has taken care of this work and the work we did in North Carolina. Manna for the Israeli children in the wilderness…for 40 years…just enough…but they were fed. I see the parallels clearly and am deeply and profoundly grateful for the manna.

40 years. My, oh my…40 years.

-Kathleen

Yes! I want to help support the work of the Center for Development in Central America.

Enclosed please find my tax-deductible contribution of $_________________ for ______________________________________ (designation if desired)

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