



Strategic Plan 2019-2021

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Vision

*Minds Wide Open*

## Mission

*CREA inspires rural Nicaraguans through literacy and education*

## Process

During 2018, the CREA Board of Directors and staff developed strategic priorities to help guide the organization over the next three years. Recognizing that strategic planning is a continual process, the Board of Directors, staff, and others engaged in key surveys, considered and discussed a SWOT analysis, and came to a consensus about CREA's future. The following priorities were identified:

- Staff and Board Development
- Enhancement of Programs and Expansion with a Mobile Library
- Fundraising Diversification
- Building Alliances
- Facilities and Land Development

The Board of Directors will continually monitor the strategic plan process during board and committee meetings throughout 2019-2021.

We are pleased to create this document in order to share with others the priorities that will guide CREA's future over the next three years. Be inspired with us!



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# STRATEGIC PRIORITY - STAFF AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT

## Goal - Staff:

CREA will invest in staff development over the next three years to grow personnel in their profession as it applies to CREA's mission in serving the communities of Tola.

## Outcomes - Staff:

- Staff will develop goals for the next three years as it applies to their role, Initiative, and overall health of the organization
- Comprehensive evaluation of staff will be formed in order to help guide staff in their professional goals
- Cohesion, communication, and transparency among staff will improve due to trainings specific on these themes and processes throughout the next three years, including annual professional retreats for staff
- Where appropriate, staff will gain the skills to be empowered to contribute to the organizational budget formation and form Initiative budgets
- Staff will also be trained on the use of technology including CREA email, file storage, Word and Excel programs, and photography skills

## Narrative Statement - Staff:

Both the Board of Directors and current CREA staff have identified investment in professional development, capacity, and growth as a priority. This was evident in the SWOT analysis that developed out of a survey as well as in conversation with both Board of Directors and staff members.





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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY - STAFF AND BOARD DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

### Goal - Board of Directors:

CREA will invest time in board development over the next three years to grow the number of members on the Board of Directors and Board Member knowledge to better serve CREA's vision and mission.

### Outcomes - Board of Directors:

- The number of Board of Directors will be increased to 11 by the end of 2021
- The Board will have a diverse background in age, perspective, and experience, and each member will also contribute financially to CREA at a level that is personally significant
- The Board of CREA will also continue to expand its knowledge through continued training with a facilitator and/or webinars, think strategically, and have a clear understanding of their roles as well as decision-making process
- There will be a defined and clear distinction between what has traditionally been called *Friends* and Board Members
- The Board of Directors will also review the status of strategic priorities on a quarterly basis for oversight

### Narrative Statement - Board of Directors:

The Board of CREA has identified Board Development as a key to future success at CREA. Certain areas of board development, such as fundraising, growing the board, and increasing knowledge have been identified for future growth that will affect the sustainability and strength of the organization.



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## STRATEGIC PRIORITY - PROGRAMS

### Goal:

Strengthening current programs of the three core initiatives of Youth Development, Education Outreach, and Library Services and launching the Mobile Pop Up Library of the Library Services Initiative to reach remote communities.

### Outcomes:

- Implement further evaluation of Initiatives with the support of the deputy director role over 2019 and 2020 to gather quality data on success of programs
- Provide better quality instruction as part of the Education Outreach Initiative through the implementation of a CREA curriculum to supplement learning at CREA and in the local schools
- Transformation of the Youth Development Social Empowerment Programs to include financial literacy as well as a transition to a formal Mentorship Component to engage participants
- Enhance the community health component of the Youth Development program as identified by internal and external stakeholders
- Implementation of the Mobile Pop Up Library with the Library Services Initiative to reach initially two additional communities in 2019 and growing each subsequent year
- Provide better quality instruction and support to clients through the hiring of an additional staff members for programs

### Narrative Statement:

According to both the Board of Directors and the staff through conversation as well as data from the survey, it was clear that CREA's growth should be sustainable. Continual work needs to be done in order to enhance the Initiatives' reach as well as quality of programs to ensure children are receiving the support they need in literacy, developing a joy of reading, core school subjects, support, and informal learning aspects such as leadership.



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# STRATEGIC PRIORITY - FUNDRAISING

## Goal:

Engage in diversification of CREA's fundraising efforts to ensure continuation of programs to advance the organization's mission.

## Outcomes:

- Balance revenues between individual giving, grants, campaigns, and events so that grants represent nearly 30% of the organization's budget
- 100% Board of Directors and Friends contributing at a personally significant level to CREA
- Creation and implementation of a fundraising model that outlines foundation and individual giving strategies as well as leveraging the use of technology
- Host a U.S. based fundraising event that shares CREA vision and mission as well as cultivates donors

## Narrative Statement:

Funding is critical to the sustainable growth of CREA. Each year the organization's budget has increased due to providing more focused services as well as expansion of programs. We have also taken on additional costs with the maintenance of the library and education resource center. Additionally, we aim to have a sustainable budget that reflects CREA's strategic priorities as outlined in this document. Lastly, the current situation in Nicaragua is challenging us to be creative in diversifying our funding sources as certain events and campaigns may not be as available as previously.





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# STRATEGIC PRIORITY - BUILDING ALLIANCES

## Goal:

Build alliances with local, national, and international institutions in order to leverage the quality of programs.

## Outcomes:

- Work with a network of local partners focusing on children and youth in order to share information related to CREA's mission and avoid duplication of efforts
- Identify for each Initiative of CREA a potential partner to be a sounding board, advisory resource, and share key knowledge to enhance programming
- Promote shared knowledge through CREA's monthly events that incorporate outside participation by partners
- Work with local schools and teachers to provide additional training for local professionals, CREA staff included, related to strategies for promoting literacy and math
- Identify a key organization for international exchange for leadership staff to learn, share practices, and advance knowledge in literacy and education

## Narrative Statement:

The CREA Board of Directors recognizes the importance of working with others, locally and internationally, to further CREA's mission. Especially as there are limited resources and organizations in the area where CREA works, strategic partnerships enable CREA to have a further reach and better quality programs in order to more strategically serve the local communities.



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# STRATEGIC PRIORITY - FACILITIES AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

## Goal:

The development of the facilities and land will encourage learning, reading, and environmental stewardship.

## Outcomes:

- Reconstruct the front entrance of CREA so that is welcoming to children, families, visitors, and safe for bicycles, pedestrians, cars, and motorcycles
- Finalize a site map for CREA to follow future growth and development of the land
- Work with landscaping professionals to develop a site map that focuses on promoting learning and environmental stewardship
- Revisit the use of the facility in conjunction with staff to ensure space is being used efficiently and in a manner that fosters learning and reading

## Narrative Statement:

The CREA Library and Resource Center is in great shape, but already we are in need of additional space as well as development of the land. There is ample terrain on the CREA property to expand to meet the needs of CREA participants of all ages that visit CREA each day to read, learn, and explore.





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## WANT TO JOIN US?

CREA can't do any of this without you. To learn more about how you can get involved, please reach out to Corrie Burdett at [corrie@creanicaragua.org](mailto:corrie@creanicaragua.org). We look forward to having a conversation!

Thank you!

From the entire CREA Team

