



2019
Annual Report

CREA

Letter from the Executive Director

I want to highlight the determination of the hundreds of Nicaraguan children, adolescents, youth, and families that actively engage in CREA programming. Through CREA's Library Services, Academic Success, and Youth Development Initiatives, literacy and education are a constant source of hope, support and guidance to our community.

CREA is an oasis for so many. For Anabel, a primary school participant in our Library Services and Academic Success Initiatives highlighted in this report, it is a place where during 2019 she learned to count up to nearly 100 and began her reading journey. Her appetite for books is ferocious.

For Luisa, a preteen participant in the Youth Development Initiative, CREA represents an opportunity for a better future. She makes the 2 hour journey to CREA and the 2 hour journey back home twice per week from the remote community of Sanchez.

I am proud of the accomplishments of CREA participants and staff members over the course of 2019. Their determination and resiliency, along with your support, generosity, and collaboration, has created a culture of hopes and dreams - of Minds Wide Open.

Guided by our five Strategic Priorities adopted in 2018, focusing on development and strengthening of the organization, CREA's focused approach continues to have an incredibly positive impact on so many.

You make CREA possible for hundreds of Nicaraguan children, adolescents, youth, and families. Muchísimas gracias - su ayuda es muy apreciada.

In partnership,

Corrie Burdett

Corrie Burdett



Education Snapshot of Nicaragua

CREA operates in the Tola region of Nicaragua.



12.2

Expected number of years of schooling

6.7

Average number of years of schooling

49.8%

Primary school dropout rate

Of the primary school students in rural Nicaragua that make it to secondary school, many dropout before their graduation.

CREA is actively working with children, adolescents, youth, and families to improve this education landscape.

Through three core Initiatives, Library Services, Youth Development, and Academic Success, CREA reaches multiples rural communities in order to inspire through literacy and education.



Meet Anabel

In the start of 2019, Anabel was unsure of how to count to 10 and could not read. She would use her imagination to create stories based on the many illustrated books available in the CREA library. We were all lucky to witness her creativity, as she always took us on amazing adventures.

After a year of working closely with the Library Services and Academic Success Initiatives, Anabel is excelling in her ability to count and read. She can read a book front to cover! She continues to explore the shelves of the library - reading to herself, to others, or continuing to engage in her storytelling abilities. Her favorite books are Olivia and the Fairy Princesses and Nuria Juega a Ser Medico. Most encouragingly, she now dreams of becoming a doctor or a teacher.

Anabel also encourages her other five siblings to visit CREA - evidence that our best referrals come from our participants. Anabel's progress is an inspiration to us all and to her mother, who participates in Mommy and Me each week.

Review of Strategic Priorities

1

Staff and Board Development

2

Enhancement of Programs & Expansion of Mobile Library

3

Fundraising Diversification

4

Building Partner and Community Alliances

5

Facilities and Land Development

Staff and Board Development

32% of CREA's Nicaraguan staff took advantage of professional development funds in order to continue their higher education in degrees relevant to CREA's work

Gustavo Noguera, CREA's Youth Development Assistant, received his degree in Tourism from Universidad Hispanoamerica.

Mariana Castillo, CREA's Academic Success Coordinator, represented CREA in a regional educational conference in Guatemala with other organizations such as the Strachan Foundation.

CREA's staff participated in an organizational capacity assessment with Global Fund for Children in order to address areas of strength and growth. 2019 included building on resiliency as a strength as well as documenting CREA methodologies.

CREA welcomed Tessa Gunther, a long time friend of CREA, to its Board of Directors. She brings a passion for books, education, as well as skills in fundraising.

CREA officially formed an Advisory Council and welcomed 9 initial members. They live across 4 states of the U.S. as well as Nicaragua and England. They bring a wealth of diverse expertise and perspectives to CREA.

Enhancement of Programs and Expansion of Mobile Library

CREA enhanced the reach of the Community Health Program of the Youth Development Initiative through partnerships with the Ministry of Health and Casa de la Mujer, expanding to the remote community of Las Canas as well as visits to the high school in Las Salinas.

The re-design of the College Entrance and Exam Preparation program of the Academic Success Initiative provided not only academic preparation for the entrance exams but also emotional support in order for this dedicated group of young people to more easily succeed.

The Mobile Library began with weekly visits to the remote community of Ojochal - new, additional families participated in the program from March to December.

Fundraising Diversification

CREA's Board of Directors focused on the long term sustainability of the organization by growing engagement with donors through an annual U.S. based event - in 2019, the event took place in Seattle, WA.

New partnerships were formed with granting foundations, including the Global Fund for Children resulting in funding and organizational capacity support.

Building Partner and Community Alliances

With support from the Global Fund for Children, CREA engaged in incredible conversations with other organizations working to promote the well-being of children, adolescents, and youth in Central America. Conversations included how to increase youth participation in the decision-making process.

The relationship with the Ministry of Health and Casa de la Mujer deepened with our first ever fair that promoted health education. More than 100 people participated and the feedback was enthusiastic. We hope to make this an annual event!

CREA hosted an event for directors and teachers from the Ministry of Education (MINED) in order to facilitate deeper connections with local communities. As a result, we were able to work more closely with MINED in 2019.



Facilities and Land Development

The CREA entrance was constructed to address issues of water drainage in the rainy season. It features a bus stop as well as one-of-a-kind piece of welcoming art designed by Nicaraguan Artist Augusto Silva.

Progress has also been made on CREA's site map, which will help guide future construction to address current and future needs about space. Currently, CREA finds itself with more participants than space. A good problem to have but one that will need to be resolved in order to continue to offer high quality programs.



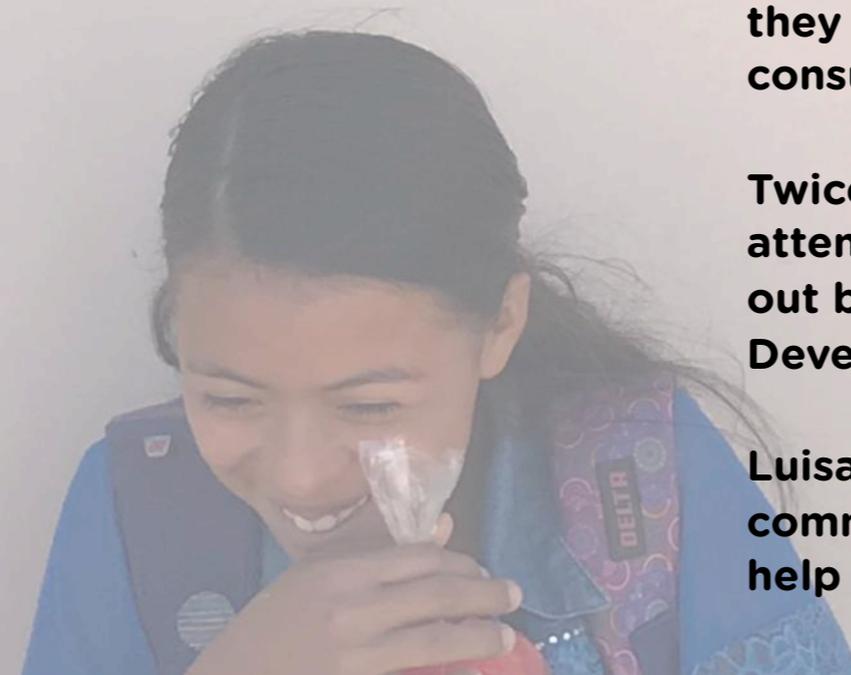
Meet Luisa

Luisa is 12 years and is from the community of Sanchez #3. She heard about CREA from some of the kids in her community, and she thought it was an incredible opportunity to have a better life and future.

Luisa has 7 brothers and sisters. Her mother does her best to provide for her family as a single mom with little help. As a family, they work in the garden to produce food for personal consumption and to sell.

Twice a week, Luisa makes the 2 hour journey from home to attend CREA. As an avid reader, she covets the ability to check out books from CREA and enjoys participating in the Youth Development Initiative programming.

Luisa dreams of becoming a doctor as a way to help her community that does not have a health clinic. She also wishes to help support her family in the future.



CREA's Reach

11 Rural Communities engaging in CREA programs

18 Local Nicaraguan Staff Members

4,523 Titles in the Library

2,464 Total Circulation of Books

4 Local Schools Receiving CREA visits on a weekly basis

2,486 Babies, Children, Adolescents, Youth, and Adults engaging in CREA's Library Services, Academic Success, and Youth Development Initiatives

1 University Graduate as part of the CREA Scholarship Program

Countless smiles and Infinite number of dreams

2019 Financial Highlights

- **\$336,314 total raised**
- **Grant Partners:**
 - **Gay Su Pinnell Education Fund**
 - **Girls Rights Project**
 - **Global Fund for Children**
 - **Mortenson Family Foundation**
 - **SG Foundation**
 - **Skees Family Foundation**
- **U.S. based fundraising event in Seattle, WA, USA**
- **Establishment of a Long Term Sustainability Fund**



Muchas Gracias

CREA is possible because of generous supporters, donors, partners, volunteers, and incredible staff. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of hundreds of rural Nicaraguans.

Thank you for being part of the CREA community.

PARTNERS

**Casa de la Mujer, Rivas, Nicaragua
Centro de Salud, Las Salinas, Nicaragua
Escuela Santa Ana, Nicaragua
FIMRC, Las Salinas, Nicaragua
FunLimón, Limón 1, Nicaragua
Gay Su Pinnell Education Foundation, United States
Girls Rights Project, United States
Global Fund for Children, United States
Laird Norton Company, United States
Laird Norton Family Foundation, United States
Ministry of Education, Nicaragua
Mortenson Family Foundation, United States
NSR, Nicaragua
Pre-School and Primary Schools in Asentamiento, Las
Canas, Limón 1 & 2, La Virgen, Las Salinas, Ojochal,
Nicaragua
Rancho Santana, Nicaragua
Roberto Clemente Health Clinic, Limón #1, Nicaragua
Secondary Schools in Las Salinas, Limón 2, Astillero,
and San Ignacio, Nicaragua
SG Foundation, Nicaragua
Skees Family Foundation, United States
Tola International School, Limón 1, Nicaragua**

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