



A Note from CREA's Board Chair

Dear CREA Community,

I am pleased to present our Annual Report for 2023. This report encapsulates CREA's growth, opportunities, and achievements over the past year. CREA continues to uphold our commitment to elevating Nicaraguans and their communities through literacy and learning. Throughout the year, our dedicated team, board members, advisory council, and supporters worked hard to ensure our participants, from babies through university students, received the educational support they need to be successful.

CREA's programming is dedicated to eliminating barriers to education such as geography, transportation, and access to resources. This is so CREA kids can learn to read, complete school, and go on to study a vocation or attend university. Participants come to the CREA Library + Learning Center daily, and if they can't come to us, we go to them with our robust outreach program and Mobile Library. A few things we are celebrating from this past year are:

- We doubled our outreach services in the indigenous community of Las Salinas de Nahualapa. Participants came to CREA programming for three hours before going to school in the afternoons. Their reading ability and comprehension improved tremendously and parents, and schoolteachers are thrilled. This is due not only to the increase in services, but also the state-of-the-art curriculum CREA uses to teach literacy.
- Word has spread about the impact of our increased efforts in Las Salinas de Nahualapa. Now parents and teachers in other areas are asking for us to do the same in their communities. We'll be increasing services in two more communities in 2024 in response to this wonderful feedback.
- We redesigned our Youth Development Initiative so that more youth could participate. Just this year, we have grown from supporting 32 to 137 participants daily. This allows for even more adolescents to get leadership training, learn new skills, and be supported socially, emotionally, and academically as they explore the next phase of their lives.
- We are thrilled to announce our new partnership with Team4Tech to integrate computer literacy into programming in 2024. Most CREA participants have never touched a computer, and this important program will ensure these young people learn how to use computers in this ever-increasing technological world.

As we move into 2024, CREA is excited about the opportunities that lie ahead. We are confident that with the continued generosity of our supporters, we will assist even more children as they navigate their way to adulthood. We will help them to succeed in their studies and encourage literacy in all subjects. We will guide them to successfully complete school and even help support them through university in the years to come. And, we will continue to promote staff development so our team can deliver the best possible programming always.

I would like to thank the entire CREA community for their incredible dedication and support. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of thousands of rural Nicaraguans.

In partnership,
Scott Hagg, Board Chair



VISION

Minds Wide Open

MISSION

Elevating Nicaraguans and their Communities
through Literacy + Learning



Library Services



Academic Success



Youth Development

At its heart, CREA has three core Initiatives that work collaboratively to engage hundreds of children, youth, and their families in rural Nicaraguan communities every day.



● Comunidad Actual/Current Community

■ Distrito de Tola/District of Tola

Library Services Initiative

Provides young learners and their families access to books and programming designed to teach discrete literacy skills, promote reading proficiency, inspire critical thinking, and foster a joy of reading.

11,368

**BOOKS AVAILABLE AT
THE CREA LIBRARY +
LEARNING CENTER**

218

**CREA MOBILE LIBRARY
VISITS TO REMOTE
COMMUNITIES**

3,505

**CREA BOOKS IN THE
HANDS OF COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**



CREA's Library Services team drove up mountainsides and crossed swollen rivers to bring the Mobile Library to remote communities. Moms and their young children sometimes walked for an hour or more to attend 'Mommy + Me' where they learned to read to their children with expression and excitement.

CREA measured the reading level at the beginning and end of the year for all our primary school students to assess progress and guide instructional practice. Our research based approach to literacy was incredibly impactful for the kids CREA serves. Many, many kids advanced to higher reading levels. Children who were not reading at all at the beginning of the year were reading by the end of the year, and they began learning to read at a younger age which has had a positive impact across all learning.

CREA used new, dynamic reading comprehension strategies like drawing and writing about the parts of a story, main characters, and themes to help kids more deeply understand the texts they were reading.



CREA Reading Facilitators taught young readers using our compensatory literacy curriculum which includes phonics instruction, interactive read-alouds, and guided reading and writing with a specific focus on comprehension. With support from CREA Reading Facilitators, students worked individually and in small groups of children with similar reading levels to learn to comprehend increasingly challenging texts. Students learned how to engage in every facet of the reading process, and that literacy power can now be applied to all instructional contexts.



Academic Success Initiative

Provides children and youth with critical, supplemental learning support to finish primary and secondary school.

302

STUDENTS ENGAGED
IN DAILY
PROGRAMMING AT
THE CREA LIBRARY +
LEARNING CENTER

383

ADDITIONAL
PRIMARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS SERVED
WEEKLY THROUGH
CREA OUTREACH

1,110

PARTICIPANTS IN
TOTAL ENGAGED
WITH CREA'S
ACADEMIC SUCCESS
PROGRAMMING



CREA grew our Academic Success outreach by increasing the number of visits for primary school students visits in remote communities and integrating individualized literacy instruction into programming. It has been a tremendous success! Parents and schoolteachers were thrilled with the improvement in reading comprehension and fundamental math skills, and through word of mouth, additional communities requested more visits from CREA.

The number of students coming to our Library + Learning Center more than doubled. Students received critical, individualized learning support to be successful and complete school.



Each day, the Outreach Team loaded up nine pop up classrooms and traveled to remote communities surrounding CREA. Hundreds of kids came before or after school to learn reading and math, strengthening concepts they were learning in school.

CREA's unique strategies and targeted interventions improved academic achievement and promoted school retention. CREA Education Facilitators focused on active learning, fostering student involvement through critical thinking, discussing, investigating, and creating. In math, we emphasized the Concrete-Representational-Abstract instructional approach, using manipulative materials to enhance understanding and build a stronger foundation for higher learning.



Youth Development Initiative

Supports the academic, social, and emotional growth of adolescents as they strive to reach their goals and create positive change in their communities.

579

**YOUTH ATTENDED
CREA HEALTH
EDUCATION TALKS**

137

**ADOLESCENTS
ATTENDED DAILY
YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMMING**

12

**YOUTH CURRENTLY
ON CREA
SCHOLARSHIP AT
UNIVERSITY**



Secondary school students who participate in CREA's Youth Development programming daily increased from 32 to 137 this year! Students came from twenty surrounding communities, often traveling over an hour on foot, bicycle, bus, moto, and sometimes oxcart to participate.



CREA provided engaging elective classes in art, community service, gardening, and English every day throughout the year. We also hosted a two-week 3D printing workshop for CREA university scholarship students. They identified problems at the Library + Learning Center, designed solutions on TinkerCAD, and printed their designs on our new 3D printer. It was a great success!

CREA bolstered student success through workshops focused on leadership skills, effective communication, goal setting, overcoming adversity, financial literacy, and professional orientation.

More than 1,000 young people participated in CREA's Community Health programming that begins with decision making and healthy habits in primary school and focuses on reproductive and relationship health in secondary school.



Community Events

CREA hosted a series of events to engage with the broader community, collaborate with our partners, and provide services in the rural area where we work.

550

**PARTICIPANTS
ATTENDED THE
HEALTH FAIR
HOSTED BY CREA**

365

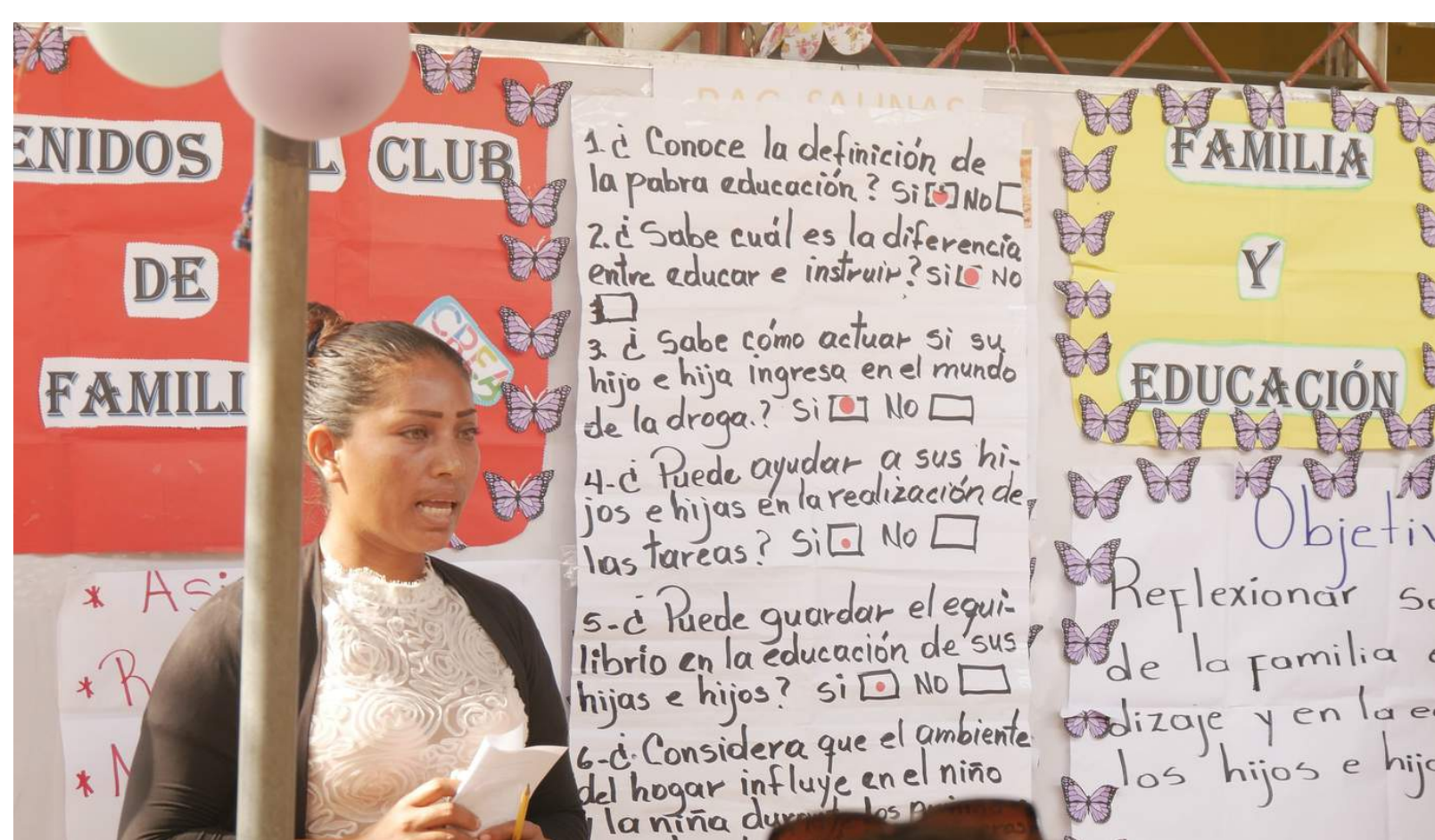
**PARENTS AND
GUARDIANS
PARTICIPATED IN
CREA FAMILY CLUBS**

35

**STUDENTS
COMPETED IN CHESS
TOURNAMENTS AT
THE CREA LIBRARY +
LEARNING CENTER**



CREA's Health Fair focused on physical, psychological, and emotional health education. Families from local communities received services from dentists, psychologists, physicians, optometrists, and more. 550 participants attended the Health Fair. Former CREA participant and recent graduate of Veterinary Medicine, Mirian, gave vaccinations because healthy animals contribute to healthy communities.



CREA provided consistent outreach to families through Family Clubs. Parents and guardians learned strategies to help their students be successful in school and received instruction in topics like growth mindset as a way to approach challenges and opportunities. Family Clubs are CREA's avenue to involve parents more deeply in their children's education.

Community events were led by youth participants and staff and focused on promoting literacy and learning. Themes included World Book Day, Teacher Day, and International Literacy Day. CREA events are always fun and festive and very popular in the communities we serve.



Professional Development

Believing education is a pathway out of poverty, CREA promotes professional development for all its employees to strengthen the capacity of our team and set good examples for our participants and the communities we serve.

25

**TEACHERS AND STAFF
EMPLOYED AT CREA
FROM THE LOCAL
COMMUNITIES**

10

**EMPLOYEES RECEIVED
CREA FUNDING TO
PURSUE HIGHER
EDUCATION**

67

**DAYS OF
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
PROVIDED FOR
STAFF MEMBERS**



This year, CREA staff were trained in the Concrete-Representational-Abstract instructional approach to teaching early math skills that engage students and increase understanding. A former teacher and principal worked with the team throughout the year to ensure these newly learned skills were successfully put into practice.

Staff also learned how to use writing to deepen reading comprehension and participated in workshops focused on targeted strategies to increase reading levels for those who are most behind.

2023 Financials

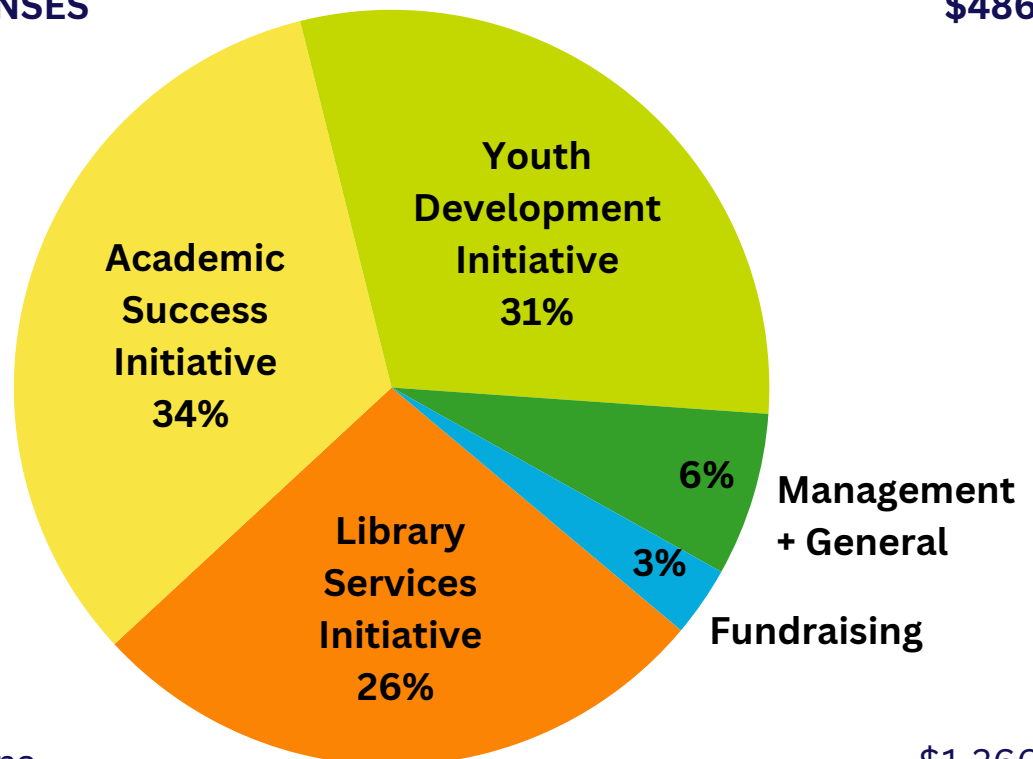
CREA's work is made possible because of the generosity of all our supporters. We are deeply committed to maintaining the highest standards of financial efficiency and transparency to provide the greatest benefit to the young people we serve.

SUPPORT and REVENUE:

| | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Individual Giving | \$546,903 |
| Foundation Giving | \$99,070 |
| Investment Income | \$39,517 |
| TOTAL SUPPORT and REVENUE | \$685,490 |

OPERATING EXPENSES:

| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Academic Success Initiative | \$164,608 |
| Library Services Initiative | \$127,230 |
| Youth Development Initiative | \$149,632 |
| Management + General | \$31,013 |
| Fundraising | \$14,008 |
| TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES | \$486,491 |



NET ASSETS:

| | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Without Donor Restrictions | \$1,360,176 |
| With Donor Restrictions | \$1,054,271 |
| TOTAL NET ASSETS | \$2,414,447 |

THANK YOU

CREA's profound connection with the communities we serve is made possible by the generosity of donors, the dedication of our remarkable staff, and the invaluable time and support provided by CREA's Board of Directors and Advisory Council. Our literacy and learning initiatives are making a lasting impact on the lives of children and youth in rural Nicaragua.



CONNECT WITH US

We'd love to hear from you.

Website: www.creanicaragua.org

Email: info@creanicaragua.org

Instagram: Nicaragua.CREA

Facebook: Nicaragua.CREA

