



Viviendas León

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



OUR MISSION:

to eliminate rural
poverty by empowering
self-sufficiency in
rural communities

fostering international
understanding while
educating our
next generation
of global citizens.



WHY NICARAGUA?

Like many developing countries, Nicaragua underperforms in economics, education, productivity, literacy and infant mortality. Ranking among the lowest countries economically in the western hemisphere, 43% of Nicaraguans live in rural areas, and 68% of rural people struggle to survive on little more than US \$1 per day.

However, Nicaragua's history, cultural values and resources provide a foundation to make sustainable improvements in living standards. The following combination of national attributes makes our work possible:

- Because of land reform in the 1980s, rural families became small landowners. With the necessary training, they can work their land and benefit from their labor.
- A long history of community organizing is the foundation for rural governance and a culture of community engagement.
- A national commitment to education reinforces a cultural value in education.
- Important natural resources including geothermal energy, water supply and agricultural land have the potential to provide for an agro-economic revival.



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OUR STRATEGY:

Rural poverty is the result of multiple interrelated deficits in populations over generations. After years of experimentation, ViviendasLeón has found that investing in rural communities for the long-term, over 4 years, creates deep and lasting impact. Programs occur annually, increasing the scope of trainings each year, resulting in incremental change while building a critical number of self-sufficient families

Our core programs empower rural families to improve their standard of living by addressing the psychological impacts of intergenerational poverty followed by increasing their capacity in areas of food production, economic development, environmental stewardship, resource management, leadership, citizenship and social equality.

In 4 years, 40% of families in each community achieve a sustaining level of food security, water security, sanitation, health training and income, while continuing to train new families and establish economic and social stability in their communities.

Our global education programs seek to foster intercultural relationships between rural communities and international groups, and build global awareness among international students who develop transferable skills, directly supporting rural development and fostering a commitment to social justice.

ViviendasLeón builds bridges internationally that create a safer, and more equitable world. Through our long-term commitment to the rural communities of León, we have gained the trust needed to bring development to the region

Start with Trust:

ViviendasLeón has worked in Goyena, a rural community of 1,600 since 2003. Our deep involvement in this community has allowed us to develop trusting relationships to closely examine the needs and deficits of the community; and to design, implement and evolve a variety of programs addressing the most prevalent underlying drivers of poverty

Bring an asset-based view:

ViviendasLeón invests in people and their potential. Our process identifies community priorities, incorporating existing assets and capacities.

Drive Development from Within:

Our development programs are designed with the community involved from day one. ViviendasLeón engages a population to articulate their needs and participate in the solutions to address them to ensure the most relevant needs are met.

VIVIENDASLEÓN'S WORK IS GUIDED BY A SET OF VALUES

Empower people to help themselves:

ViviendasLeón engages people challenged by the experience of living in generational poverty to change their own lives via a ladder of integrated programs designed to restore self-esteem, build human capacity, advance skills and create businesses. Our programs are designed to lead to self-sustainability after 4 years.

Invest over time:

ViviendasLeón recognizes the investment in time and persistence required of human-centered development. Sustainable impact requires a process of reinforcing success and adjusting for mistakes to reach self-sufficiency.

Connect our global society:

ViviendasLeón recognizes that we live in a world where populations cannot thrive in isolation, and that we are all connected in the global economy. Relationships across cultures create a climate of understanding, responsibility, support and peaceful coexistence.





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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

ViviendasLeón employs a 4 year cycle of community investment to achieve our mission. Programs focus on human capacities and implement multi-sector projects to address the interconnected nature of deficits that are the causes of poverty and to create self-sustaining communities.

YOUTH PATHWAY METHODOLOGY

While adults need immediate and concentrated interventions and training to become self sufficient, youth require more long term, diverse and protracted programs to develop as young adults. Our programs address the intellectual, emotional and relational health of our youth in the rural communities, focusing on gender and sex equality, leadership, teamwork and community engagement.

ADULT PATHWAY METHODOLOGY

Human Capacity Training is the framework and foundational program that addresses the human dimensions and bi-products of inter-generational poverty among the poorest members of society including lack of skills, motivation and confidence, low self esteem, isolation, and lack of community involvement.

Projects are introduced to support the development of skills, confidence, food security and local economy among the rural population. Over the course of four years, adults routinely receive technical trainings to deepen their success and productivity in farming, social networks and business.



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Community Development Programs Human Capacity Training (HCT)

This three-phase program provides the human foundation and capacities for community development. It educates and trains adults to start with an asset-based view, it uses psycho-social training to improve self-esteem, leadership and citizenship to become agents of change and it prepares them in the technical aspects of environmental restoration and agricultural production to improve their farming conditions. This program is the foundation of our development programs – as the skills and confidence participants gain in this program are leveraged in their future projects leading to economic opportunity and to self-sufficiency.

In 2017, we completed a HCT-Leaders phase with a total of 20 participants in the community of Goyena to strengthen the community's leadership ability. Starting in 2018, our next phase of HCT will begin in the community of Troilo.



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Family Farms

This program provides training in farming skills and techniques to start family farms on their land. We provide continuous support for agricultural challenges such as irrigation and organic pest management. US delegations contribute by providing an infusion of manpower, new energy and connectivity between cultures. This program is designed to alleviate the cycle of poverty by building skills and confidence that enable economic opportunity leading to self-sufficiency.

In 2017, the continued success of this program lead to the development of the Acopio, a vegetable wholesale business, which it is set to begin in 2018 to provide more economic opportunities for our family farms.W\

**CURRENTLY HAVE 34 FAMILY FARMS,
SUPPORTING OVER 150 INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE.
~88% OF OUR SMALL FARMERS ARE WOMEN**



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Reforestation

Due to the effects of climate change, rainfall has been inconsistent, causing a drought in Central America's Dry Corridor. Additionally, community surveys indicate that many water supply systems (manual wells and micro-aqueducts) that were built over the past 20 years are already no longer operational due to decreasing supply which threaten rural communities' ability to sustain themselves and to develop economically through farming.

In 2017, ViviendasLeón partnered with Clarkson University to propose an integrated water management plan for the community of Goyena, which is adaptable and scalable for other rural community in Nicaragua and elsewhere that will begin in 2018.

Water and WASH

This program was developed in partnership with Trees for the Future to train communities and plant 10,000 trees per year. Rural communities experience many environmental challenges that contribute to poor public health, food insecurity and persistent poverty. Many of our farmers are located on former cotton farms that left the soil contaminated. The current sugarcane industry produces soil and air pollutants which diminish groundwater sources that contribute to these conditions. Reforestation is fundamental to developing food security as it creates better conditions for farming by controlling erosion, improving soil, increasing water in rivers and making the communities less susceptible to chronic flooding.

In 2017, we worked with local schools and our scholarship recipients to plant more trees and clean a local river to promote a health environment

SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (SMEs)

ViviendasLeón' development philosophy is asset based: to work with families and communities to identify personal, communal and natural assets that can be used as resources for development. These resources include levels of education, self esteem and skills; land, water and sunlight; domestic animals, trees and plants. The program coordinates these resources through training and supports the launch of small business projects like honey production, sewing cooperatives or agricultural businesses. Through this program families have improved their economic situation, future prospects and domestic relationships resulting in an overall improvement in attitude, leadership and entrepreneurship among members of the community.

In 2017, our Honey Bee Cooperative (COABE) continues to diversify their production of honey. COABE also makes soap bars, liquid soap, hand sanitizers, and candles. CAOBE not only supports the women but their families as well.



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Youth Pathway

While adults need immediate and concentrated interventions and training to become self sufficient, youth require more long term, diverse and protracted programs to develop as young adults. Our programs address the intellectual, emotional and relational health of our youth in the rural communities, focusing on gender and sex equality, leadership, teamwork and community engagement.

Youth Human Capacity Training

This program supports all adolescents to stop the cycle of violence while promoting self-esteem, sexual, gender and reproductive rights, and knowledge of HIV/AIDS, because teenagers between the ages of 12-18 play a crucial role in the future of social and economic development in their communities.

Scholarship Program

This program grants academic scholarships to students while promoting discipline, perseverance and educational development. Currently, the program awards 12 youth scholarships which are monthly stipends for books, supplies, travel, and clothing to attend school. As part of their responsibilities as scholarship recipients, students are required to maintain a high GPA and participate in a supporting role programs benefitting other students in the community.

In 2017, a supplemental tutoring program was developed to continue to foster good study habits and provide additional educational help.

Youth Soccer Program

This program provides the youth in rural communities with soccer training, lessons in teamwork, leadership and gender inclusion while promoting physical health.



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Computer Literacy Program

This program hopes to address a challenge associated with rural Nicaragua: as opportunities increasingly concentrate in urban areas, young people from rural areas are migrating to big cities at a growing rate. The program will include classes that teach computer basics as well as integrate computer skills into educational curriculums to prepare students for better employment opportunities.

In 2017, ViviendasLeon received a generous donation of technology from Novaris Tech as aim to advance digital inclusion.

Youth Arts Program

This program works with adolescents from diverse and vulnerable situations. By learning new skills - in handicrafts and salesmanship - these youth develop confidence and a sense of community helping them to establish a strong foundation and set out on a new trajectory of opportunity and potential for their futures.

In 2017, the program entered a new phase as it started a new cohort of 26 students in the community of Troilo in addition to the 30 students already involved in Goyena



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Youth Carpentry Program

This program takes donated pallets and they break them down and re-use their wood for carpentry purposes. A professional carpenter teaches youth how to properly use the tools and build furniture. After the furniture is completed the youth sells it and uses the revenue to help their community and other youth programs. This has increased the youth's confidence and understanding of sustainability.

In 2017, the carpentry program increased the number of participants from 5 to 10 local youth.



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Trip participants help directly support ongoing development projects to help not just advance them, but understand them as well
- Trip participants get first hand experience learning alongside community members as they build global awareness and foster a commitment to social justice

Trip participants will...

- Be put outside their comfort zones, so they can learn new things
- Develop transferable skills as they use their skills in new ways and return with new capacities and insights
- Examine their own preconceptions to develop understanding and empathy for others

We carefully structure our Global Education Program to create a safe environment that allows for students to be challenged all while having a system of support alongside them.

GLOBAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

By bringing groups of students and families down to Nicaragua to participate in our Global Education program, they become part of the solution in eliminating rural poverty by working side by side with community members by building self-sufficient communities.

IN 2017...

5 Global Education Trips

Global Education Curricular Themes:

- Exploring flora and fauna in Nicaragua's Miraflores Cloud Forest
- Sustainable Development in the Global South, A Nicaraguan Case Study
- Examining Rural Poverty, participating in service with marginalized communities

175 Global Education Program Participants

Over 3,400 hours of service conducted

University Intern Projects

- Developing Performance Measurement Frameworks for Non-Experts: A Case Study
 - Human Capacity Training
 - Family Farming
- Exploring Empowerment & Vulnerability through Design

DONORS

We are eternally grateful for every individual, family, foundation and school that donated to ViviendasLeon
Thank you!

FOUNDATIONS

Zoelimax Foundation
The Mortenson Family Foundation
Robert and Arlene Kogod Family Foundation
Art 4 Moore
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SCHOOL PARTNERS

San Francisco Friends School
Branson School
Cathedral School for Boys
Lick-Wilmerding High School
Marin Country Day School
University of San Francisco
Clarkson University

INDIVIDUALS

**there is a long list that we will input

Bill and Dina Tiedje



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VIVIENDASLEON TEAM

Evan Markiewicz	Executive Director and Co-Founder	San Francisco
Indiana Garcia	Program Director and Co-Founder	Leon
Carolina Galo	Assistant Director	Leon
Martin Juarez	Global Education Program Director	San Francisco
Lucila Baldizon	Program Officer - Global Education	Leon
Lesbia Alvarez	Program Officer - Agroforestry	Leon
Brenda Bustamante	Program Officer - Youth Arts	Leon
Cristhian Rojas	Program Officer - Social Programs	Leon



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