

Education and Community Development in Nicaragua

Your Program Impact Report—Fall 2023

OUR GRATITUDE

Thanks to your belief in Opportunity International’s work in Nicaragua, we are making an impact in the daily lives—and the futures—of children, youth, and their families and communities. Thank you for walking with the people of Nicaragua as they create lasting change.

THE NEED

Challenges continue in Nicaragua: infrastructure, political unrest, and a high poverty rate (25% live below the national poverty line). Research shows that ensuring a child in a low-income country has the opportunity to get a good education will change everything about her future. She will be healthier and be able to earn more income for herself and her family. As education improves, with perseverance and dedication, the people of Nicaragua are working to leverage community assets to improve livelihoods.

THE SOLUTION: QUALITY EDUCATION

Founded in 2012, Emprededora Technical School continues to provide high-quality, relevant education to rural students in grades 7-11. The school provides:

<p>1 Comprehensive general education and English lessons, to help the students gain English fluency, which is often an important skill in their chosen field or in higher education</p>	<p>2 Hands-on experience operating and managing the school’s organic agribusinesses, including an egg hatchery and vegetable farm, and learning about food processing via the local yucca processing plant</p>	<p>3 In-depth hospitality experience by interning at a local sustainable tourism resort, Pacaya Lodge, and learning about day-to-day operations and financial planning for hospitality businesses</p>	<p>4 Job or college preparation assistance, including mock-interviews, resume assistance, college application workshops, and business plan evaluations</p>
--	---	--	---

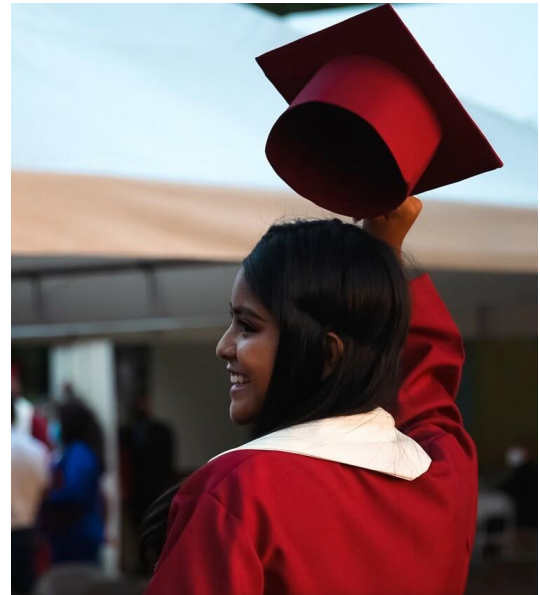
The school is unique as students receive both a traditional high school diploma as well as a technical vocational certificate in either sustainable agriculture or tourism. Students complete more than twice the amount of required English classes per week. The school is contributing to lasting transformation in rural Nicaragua by helping promote sustainable development and encouraging youth entrepreneurship in these two promising industries.

With your support, Emprededora Technical High School is working toward being a self-sustaining school that builds upon current community development work in Nicaragua while also serving as a model school for other communities.



“When I arrived here in 7th grade, I didn’t have any vision of the future. I didn’t see myself working or studying at a university. Later, after spending a couple of years here at Emprededora around the teachers and my classmates, they made me look more towards the future – my work, my life, my degree, and the value of education.” – Michael, now in the 11th grade at Emprededora Technical High School

“Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.” – Kofi Annan



THE SOLUTION: COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Community Economic Development (CED) is a proven, holistic, participatory approach that elicits community involvement to build strong industries and markets. It starts with recognizing a community’s local resources and tapping those resources for maximum community benefit. Social and economic development fosters community well-being.

Nicaragua Community Economic Development Goals	
Economic	Equip people living in poverty to prosper through increased income, asset development, and saving strategies
Social	Develop effective local leadership as measured by diverse social networks, community problem-solving, and successful community actions.
Spiritual	Encourage love of God and love of neighbor, as measured by increased hopefulness and trust in God and redemptive family and community relationships.

Opportunity International’s proven three-pronged interventions of **training, financial resources, and support** enhance the community economic development process. These interventions increase incomes, create and sustain jobs, and provide affordable quality education for children and youth.

This year, leaders from 13 community boards—including the Quebrada and the El Comején community boards—participated in an eight-month training program to strengthen their interpersonal relationships skills. The training covered knowledge of self, communication, negotiation and conflict resolution, management of a community fund, accountability, and effective meetings. The Quebrada Community Board continues to work on securing their own well, presenting before the municipality and water governing body. The El Comején Community Board is focused on building five family latrines and installing water

service to one of the local churches. They successfully completed a project of building two latrines at a local church, benefiting 250 congregants.

Opportunity Nicaragua team members held community trainings in eight neighborhoods—impacting over 1,800 people—to raise awareness and address topics related to violence prevention, health, and family finances.

The annual Opportunity Nicaragua meeting included more than 50 leaders from 17 communities who had the opportunity to assess the year and share experiences on project planning, execution, and lessons learned.

Quebrada Honda Savings Group has grown to 29 members with working capital of \$2,604; 27 loans have been given for home improvement, school supplies, family businesses.

Women

Women receive financial training, assistance in building out their business plans, and starting their businesses. This year, 41 community women from 13 communities benefited from small business loans to support their family businesses; 208 women from 12 communities received gynecological screenings and education.

Youth

In partnership with the Young Life Ministry, 14 new youth clubs were established to support community teens with Bible study and other spiritual activities. An average of 180 young people participate weekly; in addition to weekly meetings and discipleship, youth are supported with camp scholarships and leadership development as part of the spiritual mission.



Medardo Trinidad Calero Mercado and his wife, Petrona, live in El Capulín with their children and grandchildren. Medardo sells bread door-to-door on his bicycle, while his wife, Petrona, cooks food to sell at the local market. Together, they earn enough to get by, but it was challenging to save to afford the major home improvement projects their property badly needed.

Last year, they joined the Quebrada Honda Savings Group. Their first savings deposit was C\$400 (about \$11). Every few weeks Medardo added a few hundred cordobas, eventually taking out a six-month loan of C\$15,000 (about \$420).

Medardo and Petrona are on track with their payments and are committed to the mission of the savings group. It is their first time participating in any group like this, and they think it is an important organization for community members.



Financial Support



Agricultural Training and Support



Education Training and Support

We continue to be inspired by the determination and commitment of our friends and neighbors in Nicaragua. Your support means children are in school and families are building healthy, sustainable communities.

We are filled with gratitude. Thank you.