

Superemos Foundation - "Christine King" Cooperative Report on Estelí projects for July 2002

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General

The main activity on the projects for July was the construction of two classrooms and other facilities to improve the pre-school. This construction was carried out by the personnel of the cooperative's environmental workshop under the supervision of the foundation's administration. The funds for this building were donated by Free the Children of Canada thanks to the generosity of the Michael Power - St Joseph's school of Toronto.

The educational activities went on as normal as did the social work activities. In July the health program undertook a complete review of its work to date and devised a program to make better use of its resources. The environmental workshop carried out one installation of a bicycle pump and the design and installation of a special bracket connection to facilitate high installations of heavy pipe systems to the pump.

Social Work

In July the craft workshops carried on as usual despite the school vacations. An average of nine young women and girls participated in a total of fourteen classes covering:

- Cookery
- Crochet work
- Stencil painting clothes
- Embroidery
- Making bags with jute

Twelve of these classes were accompanied by half hour long talks and discussions on themes of interest to the participants, some of whom prepared the theme to be discussed beforehand and led the activity:

- Family relationships
- Drug addiction and its effects
- Our ideas of ourselves and how these develop
- The social context of family life in Estelí
- Hygiene

Most of these classes happen in the foundation's school building. The rest happen in the house of one of the social workers in a barrio more convenient for the participants to reach.

The twice-monthly prison visits continued in July. On July 17th the social workers developed an activity with 14 women prisoners in which the women learned a technique to help them structure their experiences and analyse patterns of behaviour they have of which they may not be fully aware.

On July 23rd the social workers accompanied 23 male prisoners in a discussion following a film on the life of Jesus, which the prisoners had specifically requested. The discussion covered the way in which individuals develop their moral ideas in interaction social morality and social practice.

Only two classes were given by the social workers for the women's evening classes in July because the school was on holiday for two weeks. One with seven participants covered:

- Cycles of violence in abusive relationships
- Ideas of self-esteem

The other class with eleven participants covered

- How we get to know ourselves
- Individual habits and social customs

Health

In July the health program did a review of its activities in the hope of working out ways of improving services to program beneficiaries.

The initial proposal considered included:

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- Three workshops a month on preventive health education for project participants
- Medical care by a paediatrician for the pre-school children
- Rotating medical care one day a month by a team of different specialists
- Help with medicines for project participants through the dispensary
- One visit a month to deliver general medical care to the local penitentiary

After much discussion with both project staff and project participants the following program was agreed:

- A class once a week for the women's school students on health matters of immediate concern to them delivered by one of our teachers who is also a nurse;
- Attendance by a psychologist two days a week to monitor the children of the pre-school and provide general counselling to parents, students and other program participants;
- Once monthly visits to the local prison by a general practitioner;
- Agreements with local specialists in gynaecology, ear-nose and throat, and internal medicine to provide a low cost service to our program participants;
- Twice monthly visits by a paediatrician to provide health care to the pre-school children
- Cheap medicine for program beneficiaries and their families.

The total cost of these proposals works out at US\$200 per month. We think this is good value for money.

Urania Espinoza, the psychologist contracted by the program, began work on July 23rd. Urania is following up previous work done by psychologist Silvia Torrez on a voluntary basis earlier in the year. Silvia had written up studies on 9 of the pre-school children and has started a further 8. In July Urania began following up on those seventeen children and has prioritized ten others for future work through August. She has also programmed attention for twelve parents of pre-school children. On July 30th she led a workshop for 13 parents of children in the pre-school on the theme "What happens in the home?"

The pharmacy gave a month's supply of multivitamins to all the pre-school children from a donation made by the Nicaragua Medical Alliance. The inventory showed the pharmacy running low on medicine for chest complaints and medicines in paediatric presentations but adequately stocked otherwise.

The program made one visit to the local prison and delivered medical attention and medicine to a total of thirty prisoners.

Environmental workshop

The environmental workshop was dormant in July because the workshop personnel were fully committed to building the two new classrooms for the pre-school program.

Over three weekends however they were able to install a system to help a small dairy farm guarantee water for its cows using a bicycle pump installed with half inch pipe to lift water from well with a depth of thirty metres.

The team also designed and fitted a bracket to solve a problem in a high-level mini-aqueduct system installed with help from the workshop last December. The aqueduct consists of a 100 yards of flexible two inch PVC pipe suspended between a total of five posts. When full of water the weight tends to drag the first connection out of its T-junction. The bracket designed by the workshop grips the pipe at three separate points and braces it to the first post in the system by means of an adjustable bolt. So the weight of water in the pipe is carried by the bracket, thus relieving the pressure on the T-junction.

This simple device will be very important in future installations of similar aqueducts.

Towards the end of July the workshop team visited three different communities where they expect to install a total of seven bicycle pumps.

Pre-school

Through July the average attendance was 39 children: 21 boys and 18 girls.

At the start of July the staff attended a two-day mandatory workshop given by the Ministry of Education on methodology and administration.

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We spent another two days doing an exchange with staff of the New Dawn pre-school which is organised in a the La Porra barrio on the outskirts of the city.

At the end of the month the pre-school held its monthly School for Parents with 13 parents attending. We also held our own internal monthly evaluation meeting. The school for parents consisted of a workshop by the psychologist Urania Espinoza around the theme "What happens in the home?" and workshops on nutrition and on hygiene.

The staff made home visits to follow up absences by 6 children. All of these turned out to be for reasons of ill health. The staff weighed the children and measured their height and found that none of the children were underweight.

One of our children participated in a folklore festival organized by the Ministry of education. She came second in a poetry recital competition.

Secondary Education

During July students and staff were on vacation for two weeks. Final exams for some students were held from the 7th to the 11th.

Currently the active students attending night classes number 68. 52 women are receiving a half scholarship to enable them to attend the Sunday classes run by the school because their work and family commitments make it impossible for them to study on weekdays in the evenings.

The Sunday course is a mixed course with a total of 125 students, mostly women.

The second semester of the school year began on July 22nd.

We have decided to rotate the classes given by the social work team so as to ensure all students have access to them. These classes, three hours a week, continue to cover self-esteem, labour rights, personal development and domestic conflict.

The exam pass rates for the night classes for this first exam series of the year were:

Level	Social Science	Spanish	Maths	English	Physics	Chemistry	Biology
1A	100%	100%	86%	79%	81%	82%	100%
1B	73%	93%	Until November	Until November.	Until next year	Until next year	Until next year
2	85%	Until November	76%	Until November	Until November	Until November	Until November

Pass rates for the Sunday students:

Level	Spanish	Maths	Social Science	English	Natural science	Physics	Biology	Chemistry
I A	100%	pending	97%	87%	Until November			
I B	88%	pending	100%	81%				
I C	90%	pending	95%	90%				
2	90%	pending	100%	100%				

The first graduation of the women's school students will take place in September. 23 women will graduate. Later in the year after the exams in November we expect another 30 women to graduate.

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These are women who without the support of the program donors and staff in support of their own efforts would never have achieved the level of baccalaureate, thus enabling them the opportunity of much improved employment choices and the option of further education.

Financial report

These activities were financed for July as follows:

Women's Secondary Education

Fiona Graham, Brussels, Belgium US\$900

Schooner Foundation, USA US\$200

Pre-School

De Kalb Interfaith Network, Illinois, USA US\$544

Fiona Graham, Brussels, Belgium US\$601

Health and Social Work

*Dorchester House Multi-Service Centre, Boston, USA US\$140 (carried forward from June)
& US\$246 (paid in the first week of August)*

Environmental workshop

Rotary Club of Toronto Leaside, Canada, US\$124

In July, the foundation received a donation for general use on the projects of US\$3650 from Christine King Memorial Trust/Elizabeth Wilmshurst. Of this US\$482 was allocated to the environmental workshop, US\$500 to purchase a small plot of land beside the existing site to enable future conservation works against flooding from the nearby river. US\$ 500 to reserves. US\$1800 to cover administrative personnel costs. US\$365 to general operating costs (water, electricity, telephone, and maintenance).

The financial outlook for the remainder of the second semester is good on the whole. We have secure funding for the pre-school until the end of the year. We are also fortunate to have funding for our health and social work activities until next year. Our main worry is the funding for the women's secondary education classes and general operating costs. We expect to have a shortfall of around US\$2500 for the education classes and of around US\$1500 for general operating costs. We are trying hard to generate as much income as possible from the cooperative's activities to make good this shortfall and to minimise costs in so far as possible. We should have a better idea of our position for the last four months of the year by the end of August.