

"Christine King" Cooperative & Superemos

Newsletter

July 2005

Postal Address:-Apartado Postal 201, Esteli, Nicaragua. Tel: (505) 713 7166
E-mail: superemo@chispalinux.net

General

July brought a welcome break for the project workers who took a week off to coincide with the end of the first semester of the academic year. That gave the admin workers a chance to do some maintenance around the site and catch up with various chores. Thank you to all our supporters for helping us develop and sustain the services our program workers are able to offer local people in northern Nicaragua.



Odontologist Jorge Zeledon treats a patient in Esteli's penitentiary

Health

The program dentist Jorge Luis Zeledón saw 12 patients during his monthly visit to Esteli's penitentiary, while Dr. Aura Esther Garmendia attended another 12 prisoners during her monthly visit. Program coordinator Gladys Ruiz made up the patients' prescriptions and they were delivered the following day. Our health program provides vital support for the under-resourced local prison medical service which would be less able to meet prisoners' needs otherwise. In addition to her work in the local penitentiary Dr. Garmendia gave medical care to 22 other patients in the little clinic attached to the school.

The program's dispensary was able to restock with basic medicines thanks to a donation from Hope Little of Chicago. As usual we are indebted to the Illinois-based Central American Fund for Human Development for the program's core funding. The blood pressure monitoring program that started helping project workers in June is now helping the school's students as well as people in the barrios and communities where program coordinator Gladys Ruiz gives health workshops. In July 40 women participated in a total of 8 workshops.

Legal Advice, Social Work and Skills Training

The social work team continued a series of workshops they have begun working with prisoners in the local penitentiary to study Nicaragua's constitution. 20 prisoners took part in two such workshops in July. Maria Felix Castillo was unwell in July following an operation, her classes were maintained by program coordinator Luisa Duarte and Social Science teacher Roger Coronado.

In local barrios and rural communities, the skills training workers gave a total of eight workshops, 4 on sewing and tailoring and 4 on crochet work making both clothes and adornments. Liliam Sosa the sewing and tailoring instructor gave four classes in advanced sewing. She is teaching three students different styles of shirts and blouses. The ceramics workshop continues to be self-sustaining. Program workers are preparing materials to produce moulds for Christmas Nativity scenes as well as the December feast

days in honour of the Virgin Mary that are an important annual event in Nicaragua.

The cooperative's lawyer, Dora Arauz, has focused recently on assisting 15 prisoners, mostly women, without financial means whose families are unable to help them. Dora is helping these prisoners process appeals and administrative procedures to enable them to get parole or to shorten their sentences. Dora continues to help low-income women in family law cases, mostly to ensure maintenance payments from absent fathers. Much of Dora's work is intimately related to the social work activities helping people cope with the worst effects of the continuing economic crisis in Nicaragua.



Dora Arauz - project legal worker

Women's Secondary Education



Bertha Imelda Sanabria - director of secondary education programs

This time of year is the acid test for the school in terms of attendance. We did better this year than in 2004 with around 240 out of more than 300 students who started the year staying the course. Attendance at over 90% is exceptionally good this year. Both first and second level students had exams in Mathematics, Social Sciences and Spanish. Results were mixed with the following pass rates.

	1st Level	2nd Level
Mathematics	25%	44%
Social Sciences	44%	83%
Spanish	50%	

All these exams are centrally supervised by Ministry of Education specialists from the capital Managua. The next series will be in November. We have found that our students generally do better in the end of year exams since they have had more time to prepare. We are grateful to the Christine King Memorial Trust and to the Schooner Foundation for funding scholarships for over 60 low income women students.

The secondary education rural outreach program finally started classes in the first week of July. Things have gone surprisingly well. Our great fear was that the women would maybe attend a couple of classes and then rapidly lose interest on finding the high standards demanded of them. In fact, the reverse has happened, the participants are eager to put more time into the classes, especially since they learn computer skills as well. All the participants are women community health, education and environmental promoters. Course supervisor Esperanza Garcia describes the women as exceptionally committed. We are very grateful to the Central American Fund for Human Development and Paulo de Rooij for making this teaching program possible.

Pre-schools

The pre-school began the second semester with a slightly lower attendance as a result of widespread viral infections that affected many of the children. Attendance picked up towards the end of the month with an average attendance of 32. Pre-school staff continue participating in training courses given by the Ministry of



Pre-school staff - Belkis, Amparo, Rosa, Maria Esther and Maritza

UBUNTU

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www.ubuntulinux.org

Education and a local community pre-school coordinating organization. 20 parents attended the monthly meeting with the pre-school staff. This was lower than usual because various children were still away sick. At the end of July we met with Ines Klissenbauer who assists the Sinai community pre-school which we support in Barrio Nuevo Amanecer in the west of Esteli. Together with Carman Montenegro who runs the pre-school despite many difficulties we agreed assistance for 2006. The dedication of Carmen and Ines ensures pre-school services for between 10 and 20 children in this extremely poor barrio.