



amos  communities

GOOD NEWS FROM THE POOR

Nicaragua Resource Pack

**“WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU AS WE HAVE
BEEN WAITING FOR THE RAIN IN MAY.”**

**JULIO CESAR RAMIREZ
LOS RANCHOS, TEUSTEPE, NICARAGUA**





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thank you

Thank you for downloading the Amos Communities Nicaragua Resource Pack. We've designed this pack to help you raise awareness and funds for the work of our partner, CEPAD, in Nicaragua.

We hope you'll find inspiring ideas and stories to share and try out with your friends and family, in your workplace, your college, your local place of worship or in your community. Thank you for your support.

Please do not hesitate to contact Amos Community Engagement Manager Katie Hagley (katie@amostrust.org) for further support and with any ideas of your own; or simply to let us know what you are up to.



nicaragua: background

Nicaragua is one of the poorest countries in the western hemisphere. Most of its population still live in isolated rural communities that experience the worst impacts of climate change.

It's also a beautiful country of volcanoes, rainforests and revolution, which has inspired poets and theologians. Throughout its history it has had to struggle with natural disasters, climate change, deforestation and political upheaval.

A civil war in the 1980's, aggravated by the interests of superpowers left widespread poverty and political turbulence in its wake. Unfair trade agreements exacerbated these problems leaving a country that was too poor to provide healthcare and education for its people with over 45% living on less than one dollar a day.

But with the emergence of small grassroots' organisations, its people are becoming empowered, championing equality, developing inclusive theology, and maintaining a culture that sees art and poetry as the norm for everyone.

Described as "the threat of a good example" Nicaragua is a country that prioritises the poor and shows the rest of the world how to build a community with equality.

who do we partner with?

Amos Trust partners with CEPAD in Nicaragua. CEPAD works with communities that come to them for help. It trains and equips them with the practical skills needed to run community development projects, enabling their whole community to rise up out of poverty.

**NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK**

The organisation was founded by Amos' great friend and mentor, Rev. Dr Gustavo Parajon who believed passionately in helping individuals to be "the principal actors in their own development".



We walk with a community until it has the skills to walk without us and the people can claim the rights they did not know existed.

REV. DR GUSTAVO PARAJON
FOUNDER OF CEPAD

Amos Trust has partnered with a CEPAD project named the Avocado Tree school since the school welcomed its first pupil through the doors 15 years ago.

Until the Avocado Tree School was built, only 50% of children in the town of La Concepcion (just south of the capital Managua) had access to education and over 85% of the population was unemployed. The school is now central to community development in educating the next generation and enabling the community to escape poverty long term.

Many parents in La Concepcion work abroad, often as agricultural labourers or domestic workers in the USA. As a result for many students their teachers are surrogate parents and the additional evenings, weekend and national holiday programmes offered by the school become vital parts of their lives and their personal development.

Amos Trust also has strong relationships with two offshoot projects from CEPAD, Amos Health And Hope community health care programmes and Prestanic Micro credit scheme. Both of these work alongside CEPAD to help realise a communities' needs.



journeying with the people of teustepe

For the next five years we are partnering with CEPAD, to empower seven communities in Teustepe in the region of Boaco, to acquire the skills, knowledge and community resilience they need to address the different problems found within each community. Much of this will focus on education, training and empowering women.

CEPAD's projects include community banks, livestock share schemes and farming cooperatives. CEPAD's agricultural projects not only enable individuals to sell what they grow, but also teach sustainable agricultural techniques to counter soil erosion caused by global warming.

They also recognise the vital role of women in successful community development. The Women's Patio Project is one of CEPAD's most recent and successful initiatives. Each woman participating in the project receives ten hens, one rooster, and a wide variety of seed stock.

Alongside this, they receive training in simple agricultural and irrigation methods that protect against soil erosion and other climate change related problems. These women are then able to provide for their families and cultivate their own food even on the smallest patch of ground.

The seven communities that we will be supporting all have different needs and are all at the beginning of their journey.

**NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK**

An elephant and a chicken were friends but when the chicken had to sit for days on her eggs waiting for them to hatch the elephant was impatient and wanted to help. So she gently lifted her off and took her place.

Unfortunately, too much development work is like this — crushing the communities that it seeks to assist.

GILBERTO AGUERRE
CEPAD, NICARAGUA

CEPAD chooses to listen to the communities they work with, despite, or indeed because of their expertise, they will not tell communities what they have to do.

Right now, we cannot tell you exactly what kind of projects each of the seven communities of Teustepe will put into place but as you read this, CEPAD is working with each of them to identify the issues they face and to prioritise their needs. Only then will they help the communities implement change.

What we can tell you is that the members of each community will be heard and they will all work together to work out what is most important for their community and then, and only then, will CEPAD start training people within the communities to make a difference.

GOOD NEWS FROM EL NANCITAL

One of the the seven communities we will support is El Nancital. The road to El Nancital is very poor; it is impossible for vehicles to pass, so the only way to arrive is on foot or horseback. It is about a 30 minute journey from the main highway on foot. There is no potable water source, and no electricity. A few of the more wealthy families have solar panels. Drought is fierce in this area.



NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK



We've been fighting to improve the road to our community for 20 years. The government of Teustepe has never helped us. No one has ever helped us until CEPAD. Our other big problem is a lack of water. We really need a well. Our main source of water is a nearby creek.

BARNABE AMADO
PRESIDENT OF THE CDC

HERE IS WHAT THE WOMEN FROM EL NANCITAL HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR LIVES AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH CEPAD.

DAMARIS ORTEGA:

This is the first time women are getting involved in leadership and the economy of our community. I'm really excited and not afraid of the challenge. CEPAD is working really hard, and so are we. If we can keep working hard together for these 5 years, we will accomplish a lot.

JOCONDA ORTEGA:

I attended a workshop to learn to make piñatas. It was really fun, and they've already asked me to make one for a party at the school. It is a way that I can work from home to support my family.

JUSTA AMADOR ORTEGA:

I worked with CEPAD on a pastoral committee more than 20 years ago, and I saw really amazing things happen. I trust CEPAD a lot.

BLANCA ROSA ORTEGA:

I want to learn things I don't know how to do, like baking and cooking so I can sell food. We have so many goals to improve ourselves and achieve things. There are a lot of needs.

MARIA ISABEL ORTEGA RAMIREZ:

A garden is the light of the home, it is grace, it is luxury. I am so excited to grow my own vegetables so my husband doesn't have to bring them from the market in Managua. I'm very ready to work hard.

Please visit [Dropbox](#) for a photo of the women of El Nancital



how can you help?

We have committed to raising a minimum of £10,000 for the next 5 years for the 7 communities of Teustepe.

We are looking for a minimum of 30 individuals, groups of friends, community groups, churches and schools to join us on this journey and to commit to giving £360 per year for the next 5 years.

This may be in the form of individual giving (£30 per month), you may get together with a couple of friends and each give £10 a month or you might decide to encourage your church or workplace to join you in a yearly fundraising event to raise the £360.

Whatever you do, we are here to help. Contact katie@amostrust.org to let us know your intentions and we will do all we can to help you with resources and ideas.

We also want you or your group to feel connected with the communities in Teustepe so if you let us know what you are up to, we can send updates about their progress as well as a certificate to display in your church or community group to encourage you as you walk on this journey with the people of Teustepe.

When you commit to supporting this work we will also keep you updated with news of their progress via regular e-newsletters.



further resources

In this section you will find liturgy, readings and prayers that you could use during an event or service.

We have created a Dropbox with photos, PowerPoint presentations and logos.

And please visit CEPAD's website for more information and films.

PRAYER FOR NICARAGUA

O Nicaragua

You are a poem, you are a song

Like a primitive painting, so bright and so strong.

You are a story, you are a prayer

You are the birth of a dream and we'll follow you there.

You are bright colours and birds of all kinds

You are trees and you are flowers, you are everything fine.

O Nicaragua, you are a longing like an unspoken prayer,

Where time holds its breath, you are joy and despair.

O Nicaragua

Land of beauty, land of creativity.

We meet your people. We hear your stories.

We are inspired by your poetry, paintings, songs and theology.

Together may we learn to travel to justice for all,

For the poor, the marginalised and the forgotten,

As they battle against poverty.

May we campaign for justice with renewed energy as we remember
The struggling communities of this wonderful land.

O God, companion of the forgotten and champion of the ignored,

Be our inspiration and our guide to show compassion.



NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK**GOD OF THE PASSIONATE HEART**
GARTH HEWITT

Thank you for the values of your alternative community.
They give us vocation,
They show us causes,
They show us the value of our neighbours.
How to love one another,
Why one person being treated unjustly matters,
Because you are the God of the passionate heart.
You are the God committed to the poor
We are in a world where they are forgotten as the rich get richer.
You are the God who calls for purity of heart.
You are the God who calls for action,
For us to do justice and show mercy and walk humbly.
Thank you for the values of your alternative community,
They give us our passion for life.
May we never lose our sense of calling.

AMEN



NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK**WALKING ON LAKE NICARAGUA****CHRIS ROSE. DIRECTOR, AMOS TRUST**

Lake Nicaragua is the largest lake in Central America. It extends down from the capital of Nicaragua, Managua to the bottom of the country. Much of the lake is surrounded by volcanoes. At the foot of the lake are the remote and very beautiful islands of Solentiname.

The islands are famous as the home of primitive painters, and where the poet and priest Ernesto Cardenal established a faith community of artists.

Evening on the islands of Solentiname
The contemplative Christ
Walks out upon the water
Spirit hovering in his wake.
Come walk with me.
An initial step,
Then waves of doubt
Like the volcano peaks silhouetted against the sunset
Why are you afraid?
Take my hand
Walk with me
Come, learn.
I am the God of the poor
The human and simple God
Walk with me, walk out on the waters of Lake Nicaragua!



NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK

STRONG NICARAGUAN WOMAN

I am a woman.

I raise my family in one room and create our home.

The government gives us materials for a roof
and we can shelter from the rain.

I wash our clothes in the stream
and watch the bright colours dancing as they hang on the
washing line.

I pick the fruit,
Growing in abundance,
to feed my family.

Do you think I am poor?

Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?

I helped my mother to sell the bread she made.

It was all too much
and I left to live on the streets.

I took drugs but have been given a road to a new life.
I want to be a fashion designer
and my mother will be proud of me.

Do you think I am poor?

Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?

I meet with my friends
and we delight in sharing news of our business ventures.

We slaughter pigs,
sell clothes,

Bake bread,

And with our profits we repay our loans and provide for our
children's education.

Do you think I am poor?

Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?


NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK

I teach my children to harvest the ripe coffee,
 To work the processing machine outside our home.
 To sort the best coffee beans for market
 And to carry the precious load to market.
 Do you think I am poor?
 Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?
 I have lived through change in Nicaragua.
 Friends have died in the 1972 earthquake.
 Relatives have been caught up in the fighting between the
 Contras and the Sandinistas.
 Yet I welcome the hope that the government gives me.
 Do you think I am poor?
 Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?

You ask me about faith.
 I am a Catholic and an Evangelical.
 Faith is a gift of God.
 It is no ones property.
 I live with dignity as a daughter of God.
 My theology takes me out of the door of the church into the streets
 To work for justice and reconciliation.
 Do you think I am poor?
 Do you not see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman?

I am Mary, A girl from Palacaguina.
 Engaged to be married.
 I trust God.
 He will liberate the poor.
 He will bring down the mighty.
 He has chosen me and I say 'yes'.
 I will be the Mother of God's son,
 With all it's joys, challenges and responsibilities.
 Do you think I am poor?
 Do you think I am weak?
 Do you think I am holy?
 Don't you see, I am a strong Nicaraguan woman.

WRITTEN BY JENNY RICHARDSON
AFTER AN AMOS SUPPORTER TRIP TO NICARAGUA IN 2013



the campesino mass

The Campesino Mass identifies Jesus' Life death and resurrection – the passion – with the struggle of the Campesinos – the rural peasant farmers of Nicaragua.

It was written during the Sandinista Revolution and captures a theology of liberation and a belief in God's dispensation (special relationship with and bias) for the poor.

You might use some of these words in a liturgy for a church service or as responses in prayers.

INVITATION – MISA CAMPESINA NICARAGUENSE

You are the God of the poor,
the human and simple God,
the God that sweats in the street,
the God with the weathered face.
That is why I speak to you
like my people speak to you,
because you are the labourer God,
the worker Christ.

Hand in hand you walk with my people
you struggle in the fields and the city.
You stand in line at the camp
in order to be paid your day's wages.
You eat there in the park
with Eusebio, Pancho and Juan Jose,
and you even complain about the syrup
when there's not enough honey in it.

**NICARAGUA RESOURCE PACK**

I have seen you at the corner store,
parked on a bench.
I have seen you selling lottery tickets
without being ashamed of that role.
I have seen you in the gas stations
changing the tyres on a truck
and even working on the highways
with leather gloves in the sizzling sun.



“Now we have fruit and vegetables for
my children to eat.”

**IRENIA ARANA FROM CAÑAS BLANCAS
A COMMUNITY THAT HAS BEEN WORKING WITH
CEPAD FOR SEVERAL YEARS’.**



**thank you for using this pack.
please take a look at our
fundraising pack for ideas on
how to run fundraising and
awareness raising events and
for all the information you need
about how to give to amos trust.**

**in the meantime, please scroll
down to see the sign-up sheet
and sponsorship form.**

**thank you.
amos trust**



NEWSLETTER SIGN-UP SHEET

amos newsletter sign-up

Please sign up to receive our weekly e-newsletter 'Words of Hope' giving you information about our work, events and the trips that we run.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME	EMAIL


SPONSORSHIP FORM

raising funds for nicaragua

I _____ (NAME) am _____ (ACTIVITY)
 to raise money for _____ (SPECIFIC PROJECT).
 Please help me to achieve my target of £_____.

PLEASE PRINT

NAME	FULL ADDRESS	AMOUNT £	YES, I AM A UK TAX PAYER