



Mission Partner of the Month, June 2021:

The Peace and Hope Trust – serving in Nicaragua



The Peace and Hope Trust has been operating a practical support programme in Nicaragua for many years, and its focus is on education and health. Nicaragua is second-poorest, after Haiti, in all of the Americas, and we target the most isolated communities on the Caribbean coast, around Bluefields and northwards. Many places are only reached by boat, and the roads are rough.



We have sent teams of UK volunteers to do much of the work, including building schools and have also drawn in local support to deliver projects. Our teams work hard and their reward from serving with us is often to bring home a lasting commitment to help developing countries.

Impact of Covid in 2020-21

The coronavirus pandemic has had a lasting impact on Nicaragua, but the main issue has been the abrupt cessation of trade and travel; the poor suffer the most. The disease itself joins a catalogue of serious, sometimes fatal diseases endemic to a country which already has a low life expectancy, and a health system which was already under serious pressure.

For years, we have sent containers from the UK to Nicaragua of donated hospital kit, school equipment and other goods. However, government controls have been imposed in Nicaragua, which has slowed this traffic and we have recently sent goods to the Philippines instead. Our dental teams operated travelling surgeries along the Caribbean coast, but the Covid crisis has stopped this work too.



St Michael's has set aside funds for us to build a new school at San Sebastian. Our core building team obviously cannot fly out at present, but the school is a priority to build, when a team can travel safely. There are also plans to refurbish the Mary Anne Vocational Centre.

About 4 years ago we set up a day centre (Casa Rahab) for vulnerable girls in Granada, Nicaragua and it has operated largely undisturbed by the virus. Our manager Valeria argued that the risk from Covid was less than the other enduring risks to their well-being, and the centre continues to accept girls who are at immediate risk.



Casa Rahab

These girls are generally from very poor uneducated families, and grow up in desperate conditions and at obvious risk within their families and their communities. We work to return them to the education system and to better equip them to understand and perhaps control their own lives.

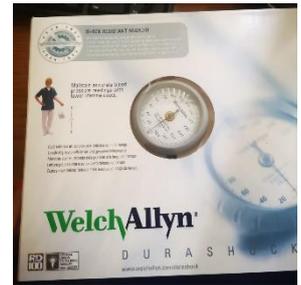


Valeria and staff

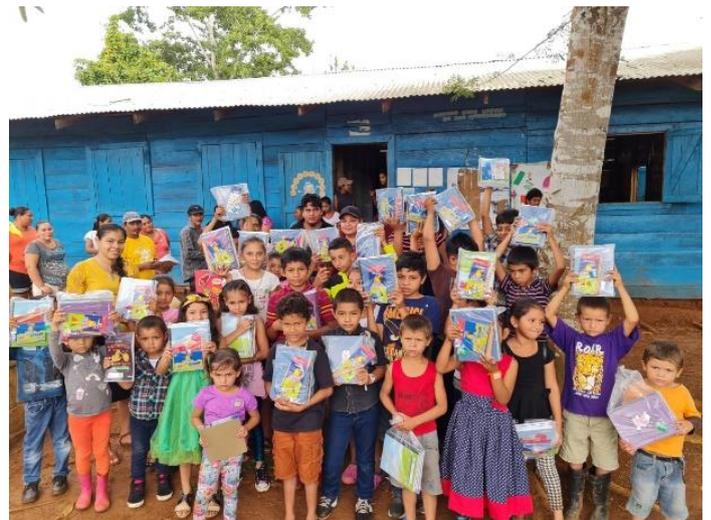
The effect of the pandemic has pushed us to use the contacts we have, to extend our projects in Nicaragua by sending money to people we know and trust to carry out our work.



We are buying kits for maternity clinics, such as mothers' smocks and baby clothes, and toolkits for trainee doctors – stethoscopes, blood pressure monitors and other equipment. We have paid the expenses of Nicaraguan medics to travel out to the remote communities we would normally serve.



In January, resources and school uniforms were provided for 5 schools and 270 children, achieved with the help of our local contacts in Nicaragua.



In the UK, our shop in Ross has continued to bring in funds, when it was allowed to open, but we have been grateful for government grants to offset the closed periods. Our other fund-raising has been very limited but we are extremely grateful to the many long-standing supporters we have. We work with people of any faith and of none, but nearly all our support comes from a strong, steady Christian base across the UK and around the world, and we are inspired by their commitment.

Stephen Ind, CEO and Trustee

Prayer points:

1. Please pray for a rapid restoration of safe international travel, so that the Peace and Hope Trust can expand its projects, and pray also for improved relations with the Nicaraguan government, who mistrust foreign interventions even from Christian NGOs.
2. Pray that the forthcoming programme to donate vaccines to Nicaragua from COVAX (driven by the World Health Organisation and Unicef, among others) can demonstrate to Nicaragua the power of international cooperation and trust.
3. Pray for Casa Rahab, the Trust's day-care centre for vulnerable girls in Granada, which recently took in new girls, one aged 11 and one 15 - with her baby - all made homeless by their family.

To find out more about the work of the Peace and Hope Trust, please see the website:
<https://www.peaceandhope.org.uk/>

or contact the St Michael's Church link person: Janice Wade