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CASA - PUEBLITO'S PROJECT EMPOWERS WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE



LOLA ESQUIVEL, TREASURER OF THE WOMEN'S CO-OPERATIVE
GLORIA QUINTANILLA

Meet Doña Lola, a 51-year old woman who lives and works in Santa Julia, Nicaragua. She is a community leader and the founder and treasurer of the 'Gloria Quintanilla Women's Co-operative,' a project Casa - Pueblito been supporting for the past nine years. Doña Lola has dedicated her life to supporting community-based agriculture and educating neighbours about food security. She, along with many other women in Santa Julia, is helping her community to survive.

Agriculture is the main source of income and employment in Santa Julia. However, the effects of climate change and a severe water shortage is halting food production, lowering wages, and putting many families at risk. Currently, the daily income for a family is \$1.20. "An average of 5 people in a house eat with that income. Some families can only afford to eat rice," explains Doña Lola. "Our proposal as women of the co-operative is to produce more food, lower costs, and improve nutrition."

The Gloria Quintanilla Women's Co-operative has so far built four community gardens where families

who cannot afford to buy food in grocery stores can grow their own food. The final harvest of the gardens is always shared with local schools and soup kitchens, fostering solidarity in the community and ensuring that everyone benefits from the initiative.

Doña Lola notes the co-operative is also helping raise awareness about

"Then gardens are helping us lower costs and improve nutrition. Despite being a dry community, we have survived. As women, we have shown that it can be done."

food security and nutrition in the community. Nicaraguan families usually rely on rice, beans, and plantain to prepare filling and low-cost meals. However, they are rarely taught about the nutritional benefits of including other vegetables in their diets.

Today, people from different sectors of the community are learning about and experiencing the benefits of di-



" [This program] helped me identify myself. It made me more proud of my heritage. It taught me that there are other points of view that I didn't realize and that if I really want something I can achieve it."

-'Voices for Change' Year 2 participant

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versifying their diets by planting new fruits and vegetables in their yards. In Doña Lola's words: "These four gardens are the 'school' of the community. People are learning that it is not necessary to have a large piece of land to grow their own food."

Doña Lola is hopeful of the future. She is proud of what the co-operative has accomplished and strongly believes the gardens will continue to empower families, women, and younger generations. "If I was given the opportunity to move to Managua, I would not go. I would stay here because I know that there is life here."

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OUR HOME IN MANAGUA



The Casa in Managua is crucial to the functioning of Casa – Pueblito in a number of ways. Having an office in Managua allows staff to:

1. Facilitate community projects:

The Managua team facilitates, monitors, and evaluates local projects, making sure the funds are used to benefit as many community members as possible.

2. Establish relationships:

The team visits our community partners regularly and establish horizontal, close relationships with the community members and organizations that we work with.

3. Understand local challenges:

It also means that the team understands the realities in Nicaragua as they

encounter them on a day-to-day basis. The Managua team spends more time in the communities, learning about their challenges, and how we can support them more effectively.

4. Provide timely support:

The team's proximity to our partner communities allows them to assist them when they are writing their proposals, have concerns about the projects, and for general support.

5. Bring partners together:

It allows us to be a point of reference for communities in Nicaragua. Casa – Pueblito facilitates collaboration between many of our partner communities.

6. Office Space:

The space itself is vital. The office in Managua provides space where

community members can stay, have meetings with other organizations and collaborate with one another.

7. Be a home for Canadians:

We are a point of reference for Canadian travellers who are interested in social justice and solidarity in Nicaragua, a home for delegations that come to visit, and a source of knowledge for other Canadian organizations that want to do development work in Nicaragua.

8. Education:

We also give communities and young Canadians opportunities to meet one another and exchange perspectives and experiences. This mutual sharing and learning is at the heart of Casa – Pueblito's mission and vision.

OUR MANAGUA STAFF AND WHY THEY JOINED CASA - PUEBLITO



ASHLEY

"I'm the newest member of the team in Managua! **My favourite part about working at the Casa is the chance to connect with community partners and Canadian teachers.** Every community visit is an opportunity to learn something new. I like that our work is inclusive of communities who might be overlooked by other NGOs, and focuses on solutions that come from the communities themselves."



DARLING

"I am the Casa Managua housekeeper and I've been working with Casa – Pueblito for the last two years. **The things I like most about working here are the familiarity, the respect, and the fellowship offered by my fellow staff.** I like that Casa – Pueblito can help provide basic necessities that communities need to keep fighting, such as schools, drinkable water, and good harvests."



MADLINE

"I've worked with Casa – Pueblito since June 2012 as the Centre Manager. **What attracts me to the organization is its focus on social justice, and that it has its roots with Nicaragua in the solidarity movement of the 1980s, when the country was in the process of revolution.** I like that we supports projects created and executed by small organizations that have little access to financing."



ELIZABETH

"I've been Casa Managua's administrative assistant for the past 21 years. **I like working here because of our mission: to support community necessities.** Even though we're a small staff, I appreciate the relationships of respect that exist between us all. I also enjoy facilitating cultural exchanges that take place in Casa Managua with Canadian students and teachers"

'VOICES FOR CHANGE': AND IT'S A WRAP!

YEAR 2 OF 'VOICES FOR CHANGE' ENDED WITH A BANG THIS SUMMER! THIS IS WHAT WE ACHIEVED AND WHAT IS COMING UP IN YEAR 3



VOICES FOR CHANGE YOUTH AND FACILITATORS IN OUR SECOND ANNUAL LEADERSHIP CAMP

In the 2015 – 2016 school year,

- We trained **100 teachers** and teacher candidates in Inclusive Education and Culturally Responsive and Reflective Pedagogy
- **6 Latinx Youth Change-Makers** completed a set of digital stories about their experiences in schools and offering advice for teachers
- **10 Latinx youth** participated in our second annual Leadership Camp.

Throughout our day camp, youth further developed the skills, confidence and community they need to advoca-

te for positive change in their schools and communities in a variety of workshops.

This year, we were excited to provide a variety of activities involving artists and leaders in the Toronto Latin American community, including SPIN El Poeta, Lady Noyz, the Latin American Queer Education Project (LAQEP), and Sick Muse Arts. Additionally, we held a community screening for the digital stories. Over 60 people joined us for this special event, which was a highlight of the camp.

TEACHERS CORNER



"I very much want to make connections with all my students and their backgrounds and ensure the students respect each other. I feel the histories we teach are all Euro-centric and it brings such as false reality to their education. I want to change that."

-Teacher who participated in 'Voices for Change' training in Inclusive Education and Culturally Responsive and Reflective Pedagogy

Contact us today to learn more and find out how to get involved



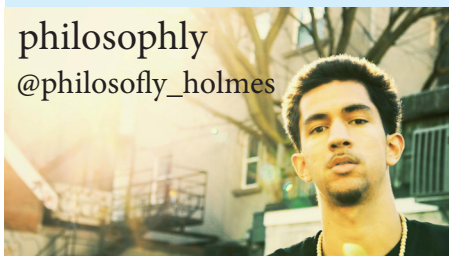
'Voices for Change: Developing Leadership In Inclusive Education' is generously funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, an agency of the Government of Ontario.

EXCITING NEWS FOR YEAR 3 OF V4C!

As we head into our third and final year of 'Voices for Change', we're looking forward to once again working with teachers and youth in order to create more inclusive schools and communities. We're also looking forward to our end-of-project conference that will be held in the spring. We hope you'll join us then; be sure to keep an eye on our website for details.

We're incredibly excited to announce that this 2016 - 2017 school year, we'll be doing spoken word with 10 Latinx youth under the guidance of four talented and award-winning Latinx spoken word artists.

MEET THE ARTISTS



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THANK YOU TO OUR INTERNS!



As an organization with a small staff, we couldn't do all that we do without our dedicated volunteers! We'd like to thank our dedicated interns who helped make this year's V4C digital stories project happen (left to right): **Luana Delfin, Keith Gonzalez-Sujo, Christelle Moneypenny, and Denisse Albornoz.** We'd also like to thank **Deb Aguillon, Alex Cahuas, and Jonny Delgado** for all of their support and for being an important part of Casa – Pueblito and 'Voices for Change'!

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTER!

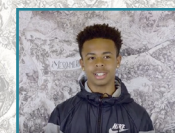
One Mic Educators is a youth-centred social enterprise dedicated to experiential learning and arts-based education workshops.



Instagram:
[@onemic.educators](https://www.instagram.com/onemic.educators)

WEB EXCLUSIVE:

VISIT OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL!



To watch 'Voices for Change' Digital Stories made by six Latinx youth

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

MARIA PAOLA WONG: OUR PROGRAM MANAGER



Born in Managua and raised in British Columbia, María holds a Master of Arts degree (York University, Toronto ON), a Bachelor of Education (University of New Brunswick, Fredericton NB), and an Honours Bachelor of Arts (St. Thomas University, Fredericton NB).

She has always been passionate about education, social justice, and human rights – so

she knew immediately that she had found a home in Casa – Pueblito. María has fulfilled several roles over the past five years as Youth Outreach Officer, Office Administrator, and now as Program Manager.

She is currently responsible for 'Voices for Change: Developing Leader-

ship in Inclusive Education', a program aimed at increasing Latinx student success and retention rates. She is proud to be part of a mighty team that works in solidarity in her native Nicaragua and with the Latinx community in the GTA.

"I'm very proud to be able to work with Latin American communities at home and abroad."

María is also involved with the local Latinx community outside of her work with Casa – Pueblito;

she serves on the board of directors for MUJER, an organization that promotes the integral development of Latin American women and youth.

In her free time, María enjoys travelling, volunteering with animal rescues, and curling up with a good book or movie.