

## New Project Approved in Nicaragua!



*Students walk home from school in Pearl Lagoon*



*Students play in at the Pearl Lagoon Academy of Excellence*

We are proud to announce that the “Model for Bilingual Education and Successful Teaching” project, called My BEST for short, has been approved by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

This project will provide much needed teaching resources to rural schools that are only accessible by boat in the Pearl Lagoon area of Nicaragua. Pearl Lagoon is located on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua where the population is largely Indigenous and afro-descended. Most people grow up in non-Hispanic households and this makes succeeding in a Spanish-only school very challenging for many of these children.

Our project will target pre-schools and grades one and two, where students are most vulnerable to dropping out if they are placed in Spanish-only environments. Bilingual education has proven effective. A study in Guatemala in 1990 found that Indigenous students in bilingual education had lower drop out rates and were more likely to move on to the next grade (Carvajal and Morris 1989/1990).

FADCANIC is working to ensure that Indigenous and Afro-descended students are given the opportunity to study in their native language while also learning Spanish since this model has shown great promise in improving student retention and promotion to higher grades. At Pueblito, we believe in supporting innovative educational models that help students achieve their full potential and access future

opportunities. By preventing drop-outs in the first and second grade, the cohort at most risk for drop out in Nicaragua, we are helping students to attain a brighter future.

Because of CIDA’s support for this project, every dollar we receive in donations will be tripled by the Canadian Government. Clearly, this will greatly enhance our capacity to support the proper education of these Indigenous and Afro-descended children on the Caribbean Coast of Nicaragua. In total, the project will reach 2,800 children and 80 teachers in the region.

Thanks to your support we are helping children in Nicaragua from diverse backgrounds succeed at school and have a chance at a better life.

FADCANIC is Pueblito's most recent partner. We are supporting FADCANIC's work in non-Spanish speaking cultural communities to strengthen the literacy skills of pre-primary and primary school kids in the Creole, Garifuna, and Miskito speaking communities near Pearl Lagoon on the Atlantic Coast.

**pueblito**

# Three generations & a positive outlook for Pueblito's future

Message from the President

At a recent monthly meeting of the Board of Directors of Pueblito Canada I noticed that of the ten people present, all but two were women and that there were three generations of volunteers present. Two of us, the writer included, are in the 60 plus age group while the main contingent was made up of folks most of whom are in (or close to) their forties. Finally, and very importantly, is the small but growing group of young people in their early twenties. This situation is very encouraging.

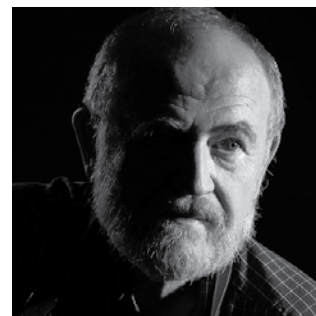
So many organizations have trouble recruiting new, younger supporters with diverse interests and experiences. Pueblito's supporters include those of us with many years of experience working in community development in Nicaragua and elsewhere in Latin America. Others of us have professional skills such as accounting, project management and law. While the younger people have lived and worked overseas, all have recently completed post secondary studies directly related to the work Pueblito is doing and some are starting careers that reflect the same interests that bring them to Pueblito as volunteers. We all contribute to Pueblito's ability to work efficiently and effectively.

This all bodes very well for Pueblito's future. Whereas many organizations are in a position of wondering how they will survive when the founding generation moves on, Pueblito long ago passed that stage and now has a diverse mix of volunteers with a variety of skills that are integral to an organization's health. In short, it is an organization with depth of leadership.

We are constantly reviewing best practices, asking ourselves how we can better work with our Central American partners and how we can best communicate with our supporters our efforts to serve children and youth. Katie Daly, our Program Director, recently returned from a visit with our partners in Nicaragua and she has come back energized and with stories of people using their own ingenuity taking charge of their lives and assisted by the support of Pueblito. We look forward to your continued support as we work with our partner organizations toward a world where children everywhere have the opportunity to grow and flourish.



Michael O'Sullivan  
President, Board of Directors  
Pueblito Canada





# High School Students Discuss the Meaning of Economic Justice

On March 25th, 2011 in Toronto Pueblito hosted its first day-long youth conference. Ten young people from St. Tomas Aquinas High School joined us to discuss global issues. Throughout the day the students showed a lot of enthusiasm to grapple with the tough and complex questions that we are facing as a global community.

*Above: Students learn about fair trade while playing Trade Jeopardy*

Students tackled issues of fair trade through Trade Jeopardy a game that reveals facts about global trade. The game led to a discussion of the barriers to having a completely fair trade world. Students engaged deeply with issues of inequality, economic domination and their own role in unfair exchanges. Shocking facts were revealed through Trade Jeopardy. We learned that 25 million farmers worldwide sell their coffee for less than it costs to produce. We also discussed the connections between wages in Canada and the need to maintain low prices for commodities across the globe.



Students then watched the documentary film *The Take*, which follows the struggles of Argentinean workers whose factories have been shut down by the owners. With unemployment rising in Argentina, workers are taking over these abandoned factories, converting them into cooperatives and making jobs for themselves. A very intense discussion arose from this film over whether expropriation was morally or legally defensible.

*Students try to guess what famous figure is stuck on their backs*

Pueblito believes in making connections between the local and the global. We strive to show that the issues that we address in Latin America are also local issues. We are expanding our efforts to empower young people to ask critical questions about global issues and begin to make changes in their own attitudes and their own lives.

Many thanks to the students of St. Tomas Aquinas! Your critical thinking and passion for social justice made the day a huge success.



# Fundraising, Knowledge Sharing and Glitter



A wonderful array of jewelry provided the glitter at Pueblito Canada's annual winter fundraiser. Everyone enjoyed picking a favourite donated bauble to take home and bidding was intense on some unique and precious items in the silent auction.



Many of those who purchased a ticket for the evening sponsored local youth interested in learning more about social justice and global issues. Guests heard about the impacts of Pueblito's current projects - Primary Colours, El Triunfo and My Best. New Pueblito board member, Shamina Chherawala, shared stories of her recent experiences working on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua.



Of the many donors, special mention goes to Christine Dunbar who donated a veritable pirate's chest of jewelry. Other donors include; Eliza Smaller (Eye of Shiva), Marion Davidson, Marg Popplewell and Connie Mayer. In the background, lovely notes came from the guitars of Martyn Skrzypczyk and Nate Kreiswirth. Trish Skrzypczyk, Suzanne MacDonald, Marion Davidson, Pat O'Dell and others donated wonderful food and wine.



Everyone left with a little more glitter for a dark, cold night and the positive feeling that comes with supporting a worthwhile cause.



Thanks to the organizers, donors and attendees for another splendid fundraiser for Pueblito Canada.

*Photos of guests  
enjoying the  
winter auction.*

## el puente

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