

# Finca El Rayo

Nestled under the imposing Mombacho volcano, and close to the historic colonial city of Granada, is the Asese peninsula, surrounded by the 360 Little Islands of Granada. In recent years many of these idyllic islands have been bought by the rich to develop hotels and holiday homes. The poor families who have lived on these islands for generations, but have no legal rights to their land, are facing an uncertain future; some have already been evicted, while others may be forced to leave at short notice and with minimal compensation.

In response to this injustice, SIFT has bought a 37 acre plot of land on the peninsula, called *Finca El Rayo*, to develop a new community for these families.

The first phase of building work began in March 2012 with machinery from the local council moving significant amounts of earth to level portions of the site. The islanders also got involved with the project, building the rock walls that will act as flood barriers.

The next phase of the project involves constructing roads and pavements, and installing rainwater drainage on the site.

We need to raise **£60,000** for this work before we can continue with the development. Please prayerfully consider what **you** could play in raising these funds.



Family members helping to build the flood barriers

# Worthwhile adventures

This summer saw SIFT supporters travelling the length and breadth of the country to raise money for SIFT. A variety of sponsored events helped to raise over £5,000 for the medical work on Ometepe and the Finca El Rayo project.

Andy Goodchild, an electrician from Cambridge, explained why he decided to walk the 200 miles from Fowey to Padstow for SIFT:

*“I was in a church meeting earlier in the year and we were being told about SIFT’s 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and how much money was needed for the Finca project. The barmy adventure was already planned but I wanted to make it more than just something for me to enjoy, but to use the walk to do something useful for others.”*

Thank you to everyone who not only took part in, but also contributed to these events. We are so grateful for your efforts.

If you are thinking of doing a sponsored event over the coming year to raise money for SIFT, please do get in contact with the office team, who can supply you with sponsorship forms and resources to help you promote your event.



**Will Barber** cycled 1,800km from Lands End to John O Groats.



**Andy Goodchild** walked 200 miles of the South West Coast Path.



**Graham Knight** walked the length of Hadrian’s Wall.



**Colin Weaver** and friends cycled 45 miles around Grafham Water.

# SIFT Sunday



SIFT turned 10 on 5<sup>th</sup> August this year and several churches held SIFT Sundays to mark the occasion. Celebrations included presentations about SIFT's work to date, birthday cakes and donations to our medical work. One church even held a sponsored 10k run, walk or cycle in aid of the Finca El Rayo housing project. We're already looking forward to our 11<sup>th</sup> birthday and hope you will join us in celebrating again then!

## Getting involved

Just as the work of SIFT would not be possible without the generosity of our supporters, it would also not be possible without the faithfulness of our **Prayer Partners**. If you would like to join them and receive our monthly prayer and news letter, either by e-mail or post, then please get in touch using the contact details below.

If you're planning to do some of your Christmas shopping online this year then please consider shopping through **Easy Fundraising**. As you purchase gifts for friends and family the retailers donate a portion of the amount you have spent to SIFT at no extra cost to you. To find out more, and to start raising money for SIFT, please visit [www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sift](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sift).



**SIFT's Trustees** perform a vital role in the operation of the charity. They bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from their daily lives to SIFT, which in turn will benefit the lives of people in Nicaragua. We are looking for some more people to join our Board of Trustees. If you would like to find out more, please contact our Chair of Trustees, Colin Weaver ([colin.weaver@seed-trust.com](mailto:colin.weaver@seed-trust.com)).



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**Patron:** Andrew Selous MP

A brief look at SIFT's activities over the past year

## MEDICAL

This has been another positive year for SIFT's medical work on the island of Ometepe. Our medical team, headed up by Dr Sandra Villagra, saw 1728 patients, over half of whom were children. They were joined on two occasions during the year by a large medical team from Carthage College (USA), and together they treated a further 3176 patients.

Three of our nurses - Alex, Aleida and Gretty - have now qualified as Professional Nurses, which enables them to take on more responsibility in the clinics. This has enabled us to open our clinics simultaneously, with one of the nurses based in each one. In addition to their work in the clinics, our nurses also gave 258 community talks on a variety of health and hygiene issues.



We prescribe all medicines free of charge to ensure that everyone can get the treatment that they need. Carthage College bring a valuable supply of adult medicines on their visits. However, due to the large numbers of children who we see, our supplies of children's medicines often run very low. We are grateful to everyone who gives money to enable us to keep providing this much-needed service to the poor of Ometepe.

## EDUCATION



Over the past 10 years SIFT's education sponsorship scheme has helped children from some of the poorest backgrounds to have access to a good standard of education. It has been encouraging this year to see some of our sponsored students graduate from further education and find employment.

Our work in the town of Bluefields is greatly enhanced by the presence of Margaret Storey, who not only helps to administer the sponsorship scheme, but also provides encouragement and practical help to the children and their families.

## HORTICULTURAL PROJECT



The Horticultural Project aims to further improve the health of the islanders of Ometepe, in particular to reduce malnutrition caused by a poor diet. Over this past year Dick Bell has continued to encourage families around the island to grow a greater variety of fruit and vegetables, providing them with a variety of seeds and fruit tree saplings. SIFT employs Idalgo Condega, a local Agricultural Consultant, to visit the families and communities to advise them how to get the most from their crops.

Many of the farmers on the northern half of the island are not currently able to irrigate their crops during the dry season, and so the aims of the project have been extended to include the provision of water to these farms. Work has started in two villages, San José del Sur and Urbaite, with the aim of completing these over the coming year.

## BUILDING TRIP

SIFT's annual building trip not only helps those living in poor conditions in very practical ways, but also benefits team members from the UK, giving them an appreciation of the needs of a developing country. Many team members return to the UK and become firm advocates for SIFT and the poor of Nicaragua because of what they have seen and experienced.

In March 2012, our team of UK volunteers joined with Nicaraguan builders and local villagers to build 25 latrines in San Pedro, on the island of Ometepe. The community enthusiastically got involved with the project and as a result the latrines were built ahead of schedule and under budget. Whilst working in San Pedro the team learned that part of the two mile-long pipe that supplies drinking water to the village was in need of replacement. SIFT was able to fund this work later in the year.



## AND ALSO...

- We continued to support the **Hogar de Fe Orphanage**, which provides a loving Christian home to 49 children and young people.
- Work began on the **Finca El Rayo** housing project, which will provide a new community for families who have lost, or are at risk of losing, their island homes (see the front of this *SIFT Insight* for more details).

# SUPPORTING CHRISTIANS

SIFT aims to support Nicaraguan Christians in their projects to alleviate poverty. We believe that it is far more effective to enable indigenous people who have a vision for helping their fellow countrymen and women than to carry out this work directly ourselves.



We are continuing to support Nestor Maldonado's car mechanics course. This is the third year that Nestor, a Christian from Managua, has run the annual course for young people from the poorer neighbourhoods of the city, providing them with practical skills and opportunities for employment. Last year's course proved very successful, with 13 students completing it and, by mid-2012, 11 of these students were in work experience.

SIFT also provides funding for a feeding programme in Urbaite on the island of Ometepe. Run by a group of local ladies, 80 children in one of the poorest communities on the island are provided with high vitamin milk twice a week.

## Finance

None of these achievements would have been possible without your generous donations! If you would like a full copy of our Annual Report and Accounts when they are published, please get in touch with us.

### Income:

- Gift Aid
- Standing Orders
- Grants from Trusts
- One-off gifts
- Interest



Total: £149,748

### Expenditure:



- Fundraising and governance
- Medical work
- Finca El Rayo housing project
- Education sponsorship
- Orphanage support
- Horticultural project
- Building projects
- Other charitable work

Total: £154,996

Please note that this section is based on the un-audited version of SIFT's accounts for 2011-12.