



When Valeria Lopez heard about girls who were being sexually exploited in the city of Granada she knew that she had to do something to help them. This led her to start Casa Rahab (Rahab's House), a Christian centre where girls who have been, or are at risk of being, involved in the sex trade can get the help they need.

Nicaragua is the second poorest country in Latin America and many families live in extreme poverty. Widespread underemployment and limited social service provision from the government lead families to seek alternative means of surviving financially. Children and young people are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation by adults, sometimes even by members of their own family. This leaves the victims damaged physically, socially and emotionally. It also puts them at risk of alcohol or drug addiction. These are often introduced to them by the adults exploiting them as a means of control or used by the young people themselves to avoid the reality of their situation.

Valeria and her team seek to break this cycle of sexual exploitation by rebuilding trust, self-esteem and a stable emotional balance in the lives of girls under the age of 18. They provide all of the girls, who are referred to them by the police or local authorities, with a programme of therapy, education and vocational skills in a safe, Christian environment.

When the girls first arrive at Casa Rahab they are interviewed by Gabriela, the team's psychologist, who designs an individual programme of therapy to help them recover from the trauma they have been through. The team's social worker, Sunem, helps them with any problems they are having with their schools and families, even offering parenting classes and therapy to their families.



The girls are taught life skills, such as how to take care of a home or how to cook healthy meals, as well as receiving help with their homework or being taught how to read and write. In order to help the girls find an alternative source of income to support themselves they are given vocational education. SIFT has been supporting Casa Rahab by funding the salary of Natalia (pictured left), the team's sewing teacher, since the early days of the project.

Please pray for Valeria and her team as they provide hope and support to these vulnerable girls and that the girls would experience God's healing and have a brighter future.



If you would like to support Casa Rahab and enable more girls to receive a fresh start, please get in touch with us.

Discover Nicaragua 2017



Our next supporters' trip will take place from 27th February to 14th March 2017. The trip is a fantastic opportunity for you to see our work for yourself. The two week trip enables you to meet some of the people we are trying to help as well as members of our team. It's also a great chance to experience the beauty and culture of Nicaragua first hand.

The trip costs £2,700 which includes food, accommodation, flights and travel within Nicaragua as well as a donation of £500 to SIFT's health work on the island of Ometepe. To book your place or to find out more please get in touch with Ali (ali.wilson@seed-trust.com) by 30th September 2016. Don't miss out!

Team News

Chris Anderson, Chair of SIFT's Board of Trustees, shares some news about SIFT's team in Nicaragua.



For many years Tony Langmead, supported more recently by his wife Rina, has represented SIFT in Nicaragua, providing valuable management and administration for many of our projects and other work, and providing local control and record keeping for our finances.

It was agreed earlier this year that Tony and Rina would progressively step down from their current roles, so that they can spend more time with their family and to enable SIFT to move towards our aim of involving more Nicaraguan people in running the charity in Nicaragua.

We have been developing a relationship with Jacobo Sanchez and his wife Valeria over the past five years. They are both strong and mature Christians. Jacobo is a qualified Lawyer and Public Notary and Valeria has recently spent much of her time starting and developing Casa Rahab.



Jacobo will be taking on the management of SIFT's Nicaraguan finances and will provide the operational and project management link to Dave Staley, our Operations Director.

Tony will be retaining some responsibility for the Finca El Rayo housing project until the individual plots of land have been passed to the beneficiary families.



I am sure you will join with me in offering our heartfelt gratitude for Tony and Rina's many years of loyal, faithful and God-led support to SIFT - without their input much of the development of SIFT's work would not have been possible.

From everyone at SIFT - **thank you Tony and Rina!**

Meet Jonnyra



Eighteen year old Jonnyra lives in Bluefields with her mum, Mayzee, and her eight siblings. Her family is extremely poor as her mum is a single parent and it is not easy to find work. SIFT sponsored Jonnyra throughout her primary and secondary education and is now sponsoring her at university.

Jonnyra started studying business management earlier this year and when she has completed the five year course she wants to move from Bluefields to Managua, Nicaragua's capital, in order to have a better chance of managing a large

company. Jonnyra realises that maths is an important part of her course but unfortunately this has been one of the subjects she has always struggled with at school. However she is quite a strong willed young woman and is determined to overcome these difficulties and make more effort in maths.

Jonnyra says she is so happy at university and can't wait to go every day. We hope that her enthusiasm will continue and that she will be able to follow her dream. She knows the studies will get more difficult, but in her own words, "Nothing is impossible if you really want it!"

SIFT at New Wine

We're very excited that SIFT will be represented at New Wine this summer. Our stand in the Marketplace is a great opportunity for us to spread the word about how we're working to help the poor of Nicaragua and to encourage more people to support our work. We're looking forward to meeting lots of new people and hopefully seeing some old friends. If you're attending New Wine please stop by our stand to say hello. We'd love to see you!

NewWine
Local churches changing nations



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