



SIFT's medical work on the island of Ometepe provides essential healthcare to poor families who would not otherwise be able to afford it. But we expect to be £24,000 short this year putting the continuation of this vital work at risk. Here we explain the many benefits of SIFT's work and we suggest how you can help to ensure that this continues.

Government-run health clinics in Nicaragua don't charge patients to see the doctor but do charge for any medicines they prescribe and this is often more than these families can afford. In contrast, patients at SIFT's three health clinics on the island of Ometepe pay a small, affordable consultation fee but receive any medicines they need free of charge. As we do not want anyone to go without treatment if someone is unable to afford the consultation fee then it is waived. Last year Dr Sandra and our team of seven nurses enabled 4,244 people to receive treatment.

The majority of the patients our team treat are children. Their immune systems aren't yet fully developed and so they are particularly vulnerable to disease. Healthcare provided by the Nicaraguan government tends to focus on pregnancy and chronic conditions. This means that government-run clinics stock less paediatric medicines than our clinics. In addition many mothers on Ometepe don't like their children to be given injections and prefer to bring them to our clinics because most of our children's medicines are in drinkable form.

Around 10% of the patients Dr Sandra and nurses treat are suffering from respiratory diseases and infections. This is due to dusty living conditions and the fact that many families cook on open wood fires. These conditions worsen in the high humidity of the rainy season and are exacerbated by the fact that many people do not have adequate clothing to protect themselves from the rain. In addition lack of access to clean water means that many people suffer from urinary tract and kidney infections as well as parasites.



As well as treating patients our team also work hard to help the communities they serve live healthier lives. They give talks to patients waiting at the clinics, as well as to pupils at the local primary schools, about topics such as dental hygiene, tropical diseases and healthy eating. They also regularly monitor patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure and give them advice about how to manage their conditions and keep themselves healthy.



The team at our clinic in Las Pilas run a luncheon club for their elderly patients who can often become marginalised. The club gives everyone who attends the chance to build friendships and to receive a hot meal. It also enables our team to monitor the health of these elderly members of the community and provide them with medicines if necessary. At each fortnightly meeting, a member of our team shares a word from the Bible with everyone who attends. This year they are planning to move the club to the village hall so that they can show Christian films.

In the light of statistically high incidence of maternal deaths on the island and our team's own experience that their patients had no knowledge of the signs of possible miscarriage or common antenatal diseases and conditions, our nurses have started clubs for expectant mothers at two of our clinics. The women who attend the clubs are taught what to expect during pregnancy and learn how to keep themselves and their families healthy. In addition our nurses give out baby clothes and special milk for women suffering from anaemia. Since the clubs started they have helped over a hundred women.



By treating their patients holistically our team are able to meet their spiritual needs as well as their physical ones. Dr Sandra says that sometimes a patient comes to one of the clinics and their condition isn't obviously physical. In these circumstances she talks to them from God's word and if they are willing she prays for them. She says that sometimes the patient just needs to be listened to or given a hug and some words of encouragement.

None of this work would be possible without the generous support of people in the UK. Despite this, due to the low value of the pound, rising costs and uncertainty of trust funding, we are facing a shortfall in this year's medical budget (to August 2017) of £24,000.

Please consider..

- Giving a one-off donation to help us bridge this funding gap.
- Sponsoring Dr Sandra through a regular donation. We suggest £15 a month although any amount is much appreciated. Please visit www.seed-trust.com/sponsor-sandra for more details of this sponsorship scheme, or complete the form enclosed with this Insight.
- Helping us to encourage other people to support this work by becoming a SIFT Medical Champion.
- Carrying out a fundraising event, such as a coffee morning or a sponsored walk. Please contact the SIFT office for more ideas.



Leave a lasting legacy

SIFT's work wouldn't be possible without our generous donors. With your help we are able to help children get a good education, develop a new community for islander families and provide affordable health care to the patients at our health clinics. A legacy left to SIFT in 2005 enabled us to build our clinic in the village of El Corozal. This has allowed our team to treat thousands of patients, providing them with free medicines, as well as to teach the community how to live healthier lives.

By leaving a gift to SIFT in your will you too could leave a legacy that will continue to help the poor of Nicaragua for years to come. For more information about how to leave a gift to SIFT in your will please visit www.seed-trust.com/legacies or contact the SIFT office (details overleaf).

Team news

Tony Langmead served as SIFT's representative and project manager in Nicaragua for more than a decade. For the last year Tony has been gradually reducing his responsibilities and in June decided that the time was right for him to step down completely. All of the SIFT Team and Trustees are very grateful to Tony for all of his hard work and in particular for his dedication in overseeing the Finca el Rayo housing project. We wish him a happy retirement from his SIFT duties.



For the last twenty months David Langmead, his wife Belinda and their two children, Joshua and Esther, have been living in Managua, Nicaragua's capital city. During their time in the country David has been assisting with the administration of the Finca el Rayo project as well as getting to know the families involved. He also completed a cross-Nicaragua cycle to raise much needed funds to help us begin building houses. With Esther due to start secondary school in September, the family are now returning to the UK. The Team and Trustees would like to express their thanks to David for all of his hard work in assisting with the project and look forward to continuing to work with him in his role as a member of SIFT's Board of Trustees.



Supporters' Trip 2018

Our supporters' trips are a fantastic opportunity for you to visit Nicaragua, see our projects for yourself and meet our team as well as some of the people we are trying to help. The next trip is due to take place in Spring 2018 and will cost around £2,500. This includes flights, travel within Nicaragua, accommodation, food and a donation towards the work of our health clinics. If you would like more information or want to book a place on the trip please get in touch with Graham at the office or by email graham.knight@seed-trust.com.



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