



2011 Community Service Trip - Lake Nicaragua

Update on our Partnership: The Study & The Diria Institute

Welcome to the second Nicaragua Project Newsletter!

As we enter into our third year of a worldwide pandemic, I have been reflecting on the impact that we have had in Nicaragua. This partnership is unique in that we have been able to see how the community has changed since the partnership began in 2010. Unlike other voluntourism activities, where a group goes into a community for a couple of weeks to perform community service and then leaves without seeing the impact or outcome they have hopefully had, we have been witnesses to growth and improvement in an impoverished community.

There is one incredible fact that stands out. We have made a tremendous impact on the healthcare system of a rural village. Since 2010, thanks to The Study's Nicaragua Scholarship Program, 3 medical doctors have graduated and another 3 scholarship winners are currently studying medicine. In the past, there has only been one spot in medicine at the national university awarded for the whole state of Granada each year. Six of the girls we are sponsoring have claimed that spot. Due to the strains of COVID, the university in Managua has

opened the possibility of more students from Granada applying to medicine. We are currently reviewing the 2022 scholarship applications. Out of the three girls who applied this year, all were accepted into their first choice at university and two of the three have been accepted into medicine. As we can only select one scholarship winner, it will be a difficult choice to make.

The scholarship program that The Study initiated and sponsors, has produced doctors as well as two nurse practitioners, one nutritionist, one psychologist, one surgical technician and one nursing technician and a dentist who will graduate next year. It's the first time that rural towns around Diria have nurses. These healthcare providers are now working on the front lines, in a rural village, in the hopes of changing their community.

The Study family, made up of current students, alumnae, parents, faculty and staff, have embraced this partnership and it's through everyone's involvement, commitment and generosity that we have been able to change the world, one girl at a time.

Pillar #1:

Changing the World One Girl at a time

As you know, we offer a full scholarship to a graduating female student of the Diria Institute to go to university. The scholarship is for \$5000 US and covers their 5-year undergraduate degree including tuition, transportation, books and lunches. Students at The Study are responsible for raising the funds needed to send these girls to school and to choose the recipient of the yearly scholarship award. A qualitative and quantitative approach is taken on three categories: grades, community service and degree of poverty. The applicants submit a written application and answer specific questions, which are then read by the student selection committee.

12 have graduated:

- 1 Economist (Bernarda)
- 3 Medical Doctors (Maria Gabriela, Valeria & Belkis)
- 2 Nurse Practitioners (Geysel & Estefania)
- 1 Nutritionist (Maria Jose)
- 1 Accountant (Cindy)
- 1 Finance (Candelaria)
- 1 Psychologist (Ethel)
- 1 Surgical Technician (Jennifer)
- 1 Nursing Technician (Shirley)

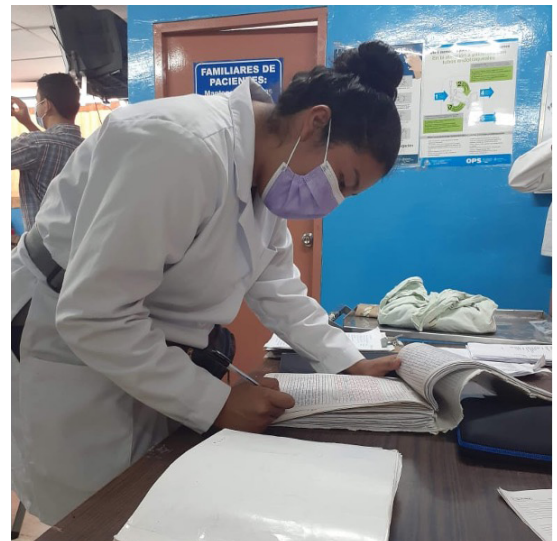
7 are current university students:

- 3 in Medicine (Ashley, Angela & Samanta)
- 2 in Engineering (Francis, Maria Celeste)
- 1 in Dentistry (Jilmara)
- 1 in Teaching (Esmeralda)

I am including an update on some of the girls.



Jilmara (Class of 2023) teaches low-income communities about dental hygiene and good practices.



Ashley Mendoza (class of 2022) working in the hospital.



Estefania (Class of 2021) helping to vaccinate infants in her community.



ASHLEY MENDOZA, MEDICINE (CLASS OF 2022)

Ashley is highly involved in community service initiatives and medical brigades with her university classmates. She is interested in pursuing pediatrics. She is now working more and more independently in the hospital given that she is now a senior medical student.



Ashley working in the Operating Room during her surgical rotation.



JILMARA HERRERA, DENTISTRY (CLASS OF 2023)

Each year there are only 10 spots in Dentistry at the National University, and Jilmara earned one. She worked on a team that developed a low-cost air compressor for dentists. It was made of recycled materials and won at the University-wide research fair in the Biophysics category.



Jilmara provides free dental care to patients in the community clinics.



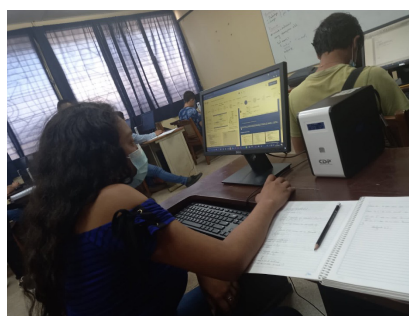
Jilmara and her dentistry classmates working at the Hospital and Emergency Room on jaw and dental emergencies



ANGELA DOMINGUEZ, MEDICINE (CLASS OF 2023)
Angela comes from Palo Quemado, a small town that is very rural (about 1 hour from Diria), where there are no medical professionals. (She lives near the Anne Frank School). When she graduates, she will be the first resident/local doctor for her community. Angela wants to pursue Pediatrics.

Angela and her classmates provide medical education in one of the poorest neighborhoods of the capital city, Managua, going door-to-door.

Class of 2024



Francis at one of the university's computer labs.

FRANCIS RIVAS, COMPUTER SCIENCE ENGINEERING (CLASS OF 2024)

Francis is the first female student in the town of Diria to pursue a Computer Science degree at the University level. She has completed her first year and is currently learning programming.

MARIA CELESTE RIVERA, CIVIL ENGINEERING (CLASS OF 2024)

During her last year in high school, Maria Celeste won the Diria High School-level, municipality-level, and regional-level "Best Student Competition" in 2019. She currently has completed her first year of university. She is currently studying lots of math courses: statistics and calculus amongst others.

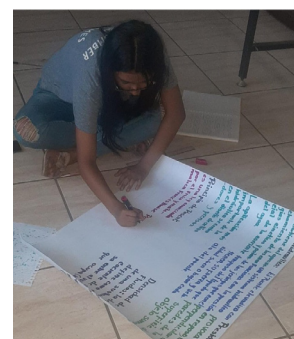


About a month ago, we were able to send laptops down for both Francis and Maria Celeste.

Maria Celeste learns how to survey landscapes for her Typography class.



Maria Celeste and her group working on a project on Hydraulic Energy.





CLASS OF 2025

SAMANTA PASTORA, MEDICINE (CLASS OF 2025)

Samanta has just completed her first year in medicine. While in high school, Samanta won the Diria High School-level, municipality-level, and regional-level "Best Student Competition" in 2020.

ESMERALDA JIRON, TEACHING/PEDAGOGY (CLASS OF 2025)

Esmeralda just completed her first year at university. She is studying to become a teacher through the Pedagogy Program.



Esmeralda and her classmates teach elementary school kids.



Class of 2026

We will be announcing the class of 2026 by the third week of February.



OUR GRADUATES

BERNARDA ALEMAN, GRADUATE IN ECONOMICS (CLASS OF 2015)

Currently working in the Finance and Administration Departments of HMVP, the largest private hospital in Nicaragua.

MARIA GABRIELA ECHAVERRY, GRADUATE IN MEDICINE (CLASS OF 2015)

Currently a Resident in Pediatrics at the main pediatric hospital in Managua.

CINDY SELVA, GRADUATE IN BANKING AND FINANCE (CLASS OF 2016)

Cindy was hired by the largest microfinance network in Nicaragua after a rigorous selection process.

GEYSEL ALGUERA, GRADUATE IN NURSING (CLASS OF 2017)

Hired by the newest public hospital in Nicaragua, where she is working in the Labor & Delivery Department

MARIA JOSE QUINTO, GRADUATE IN NUTRITION (CLASS OF 2018)

She worked with the Pan-American Health Organization and plans to pursue further studies in her area or other medical fields.

VALERIA RIVAS, GRADUATE IN MEDICINE (CLASS OF 2020)

Currently an intern at the hospital in Granada.

ETHEL ALEMAN, GRADUATE IN PSYCHOLOGY (CLASS OF 2020)

Will pursue a career as an educational psychologist, and wants to work in the public school system to help struggling students

SHIRLEY CARDENAS, GRADUATE IN NURSING TECHNICIAN (CLASS OF 2020)

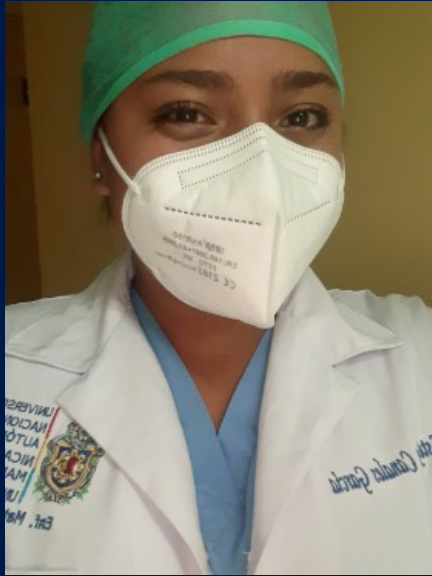
Shirley will now enter the workforce as a Nursing Technician to help support her family.

JENNIFER CARDENAS, GRADUATE IN OR/SURGICAL TECHNICIAN (CLASS OF 2020)

Will now enter the workforce as a Surgical Technician to help support her family.



Spotlight Estefania Canales



ESTEFANIA CANALES, MATERNAL-FETAL NURSING (CLASS OF 2021)

Estefania was the top Nursing student and Class President of her Nursing Class. She specialized in the Maternal-Infant Health. Estefania lives in Los Jirones, a remote village about 40 minutes by foot from Diria, with no medical professionals. Every day she travels 5 hours in order to reach the National University. This includes 1 hour on a dirt road between the bus stop and her home.



When she graduates, she will become the primary breadwinner to support her mother and two younger sisters, as her father passed away in an accident three years ago.

From Estefania's 2017 scholarship application:

"I am a seventeen year old young woman that has put aside distractions, parties, and all kinds of activities that would distract me, because I am determined that the only way to get out of poverty is by investing my time in education."



Estefania and her family welcoming The Study's 2018 community service trip to her home.



Ms. Howard presenting Estefania with a laptop that Ms. Howard's parents bought for Estefania.



Estefania's little sister.



On the walk to Estefania's house.



At the hospital.

Spotlight Belkis Calderone

BELKIS CALDERONE, MEDICINE (CLASS OF 2021)

In 2021, Belkis graduated with top marks. While at University, she participated in vaccine brigades, going to low-income areas to vaccinate children. She volunteered at the Diria health clinic, which is the main public clinic that serves her village. Her group earned second place at a university-wide healthcare administration competition. Belkis is interested in specializing in gynecology

From Belkis' 2017 scholarship application:

"In my family, education has been important to improve our poverty conditions, and this is why I want to challenge myself as a woman, because many think that women should only be educated to serve in the household, raise kids, be dependent on a man to survive, and many times we have to leave our dreams aside because of pregnancy. I personally want to break this vicious circle, and demonstrate that women also can be successful professionals."



Belkis and her classmates celebrating the end of their medical studies



Belkis and her group that won second place at the university's healthcare administration competition



Belkis working in the neonatal intensive care unit.



Belkis holding the newborn baby after a successful delivery.



Belkis helping with a C-section in her gynecology rotation.



Belkis welcoming the 2018 Study group to her home.

Spotlight Candelaria del Socorro Jaen Rivas

CANDELARIA RIVAS, BANKING AND FINANCE (CLASS OF 2021)

Candelaria comes from one of the poorest families in Diriá. Her parents work in the fields and have unstable income, making it very hard to support their five children. After graduation, she aspires to become an Investigative Auditor to tackle corruption.

From Candelaria's 2016 scholarship application:

Candelaria described her family home where 7 people live this way: "My house is located in a family space (backyard) where there are three other homes. The structure of my house is zinc, wood boards, dirt floor, latrine and one room."



Candelaria and her family welcoming the 2016 community service trip to her home.



Candelaria's home.

Pillar #2:

School Improvements

Each year, we pledge to improve some part of the school. The decision regarding what we will do is established by Study students, based on recommendations/requests that come from faculty and staff at the Diria Institute. Some of our initiatives have included: funding the building of a water tower, providing funds to build and furnish a science lab, providing the school with a class set of books for each subject matter taught, outfitting the school with technology, providing the school with musical instruments, sports equipment and providing the poorest students with shoes so that they can attend to school. In 2018, we established a vocational center whose goal is to teach a vocation to students who cannot otherwise afford a university education. Over the last two years, we have made sure that the school has educational supplies but more importantly, text books so that the students can have a solid educational foundation.



Pillar #3:

Community Service Trips

As you all know, the aim of the community service trip is to allow students at The Study to witness first-hand the impact they have had on this community. Since 2010, 82 Study students have had the opportunity to visit our sister school in Diria. We have every intention of going back to Diria once it becomes safe to travel again.

2010



2011



2012



2014



As a matter of fact, the next time we go down, we will be able to celebrate our 10th anniversary (which took place at the beginning of COVID in March 2020).

2016



2018



If you educate a man you educate an individual, **if you educate a woman you educate a nation**

African Proverb