



PROJECT SCHOOLHOUSE

# 2020 Annual Report





PROJECT SCHOOLHOUSE:

# BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES

With an emphasis on community-building and local volunteer participation, Project Schoolhouse partners with recipient communities to build new schools, provide clean water, improve sanitation, and help students continue their educations.

We believe that every child has a right to a good education, that every community has a right to clean water in their homes, and that schools can be a foundation for a stronger, more sustainable future for the whole community.

Access to clean water and basic education are not luxuries but represent vital needs for the rural communities where we work.

# LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Dear friends,

This has been a year of such challenge, but also a year of pride and gratitude.

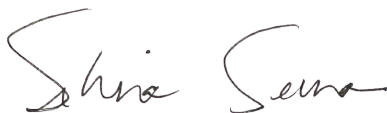
We are proud to have completed all of our 2020 projects on time and under budget, despite all of the challenges the year presented, bringing life-saving water to the homes of over 1,000 people.

I am grateful for the supporters, YOU(!), who so generously continue to support the communities with whom we work. In these trying and uncertain times, when the need in the US is unprecedented and funding requests are coming from all sides, your trust and investment in the work of Project Schoolhouse and our neighbors to the south means the world to them.

I am proud of our US team who worked so hard and so successfully to transition all of our stewardship and events to be virtual. We've heard such great feedback on the virtual Cien Amigos fundraiser, a huge effort for our little three-person team. Renata made all of the virtual events throughout the year come together so seamlessly. Tab worked tirelessly on ever-evolving Covid protocols to keep projects moving while keeping our Nicaragua team safe and set up our scholarship students to study remotely.

For those who would like to hear more about our 2020 work and our plans for the future, visit our website for a recording of the virtual Cien Amigos event last fall. And we're excited to share the project updates in this report, to keep you informed of the progress you've made possible. I'll share this photo of me in the back of a pickup truck on our way into the campo for a community meeting. I can't wait until we can travel again to visit the projects in progress, thanks to your investment.

With gratitude,



# 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

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## ACCELERATED IMPACT

In collaboration with 3 communities, we turned on water to over 1,000 men, women, and children, and 145 families have new latrines at their homes.

## PROJECT EXPANSION

We completed our first project in the neighboring region of Bocana de Paiwas, our first expansion outside of the municipality of Rio Blanco, where this work all began. We are proud that our reputation as a trusted partner has spread, helping us expand the pipeline of future projects.

## NEW PARTNERS

Rotary International, The Burdine Johnson Foundation, Love, Tito's, Frackelton's, and the Still Water Foundation invested significantly in 2020. This funding was instrumental to our growth.

## TRAINING

Training for sustainability is so important, and expansion of our project work led to training 850 adults on water system maintenance, family economics, sustainable agriculture and hygiene.

## GUIDESTAR - PLATINUM

Project Schoolhouse is proud to have received the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency.



# 14 Years of Impact



1,678

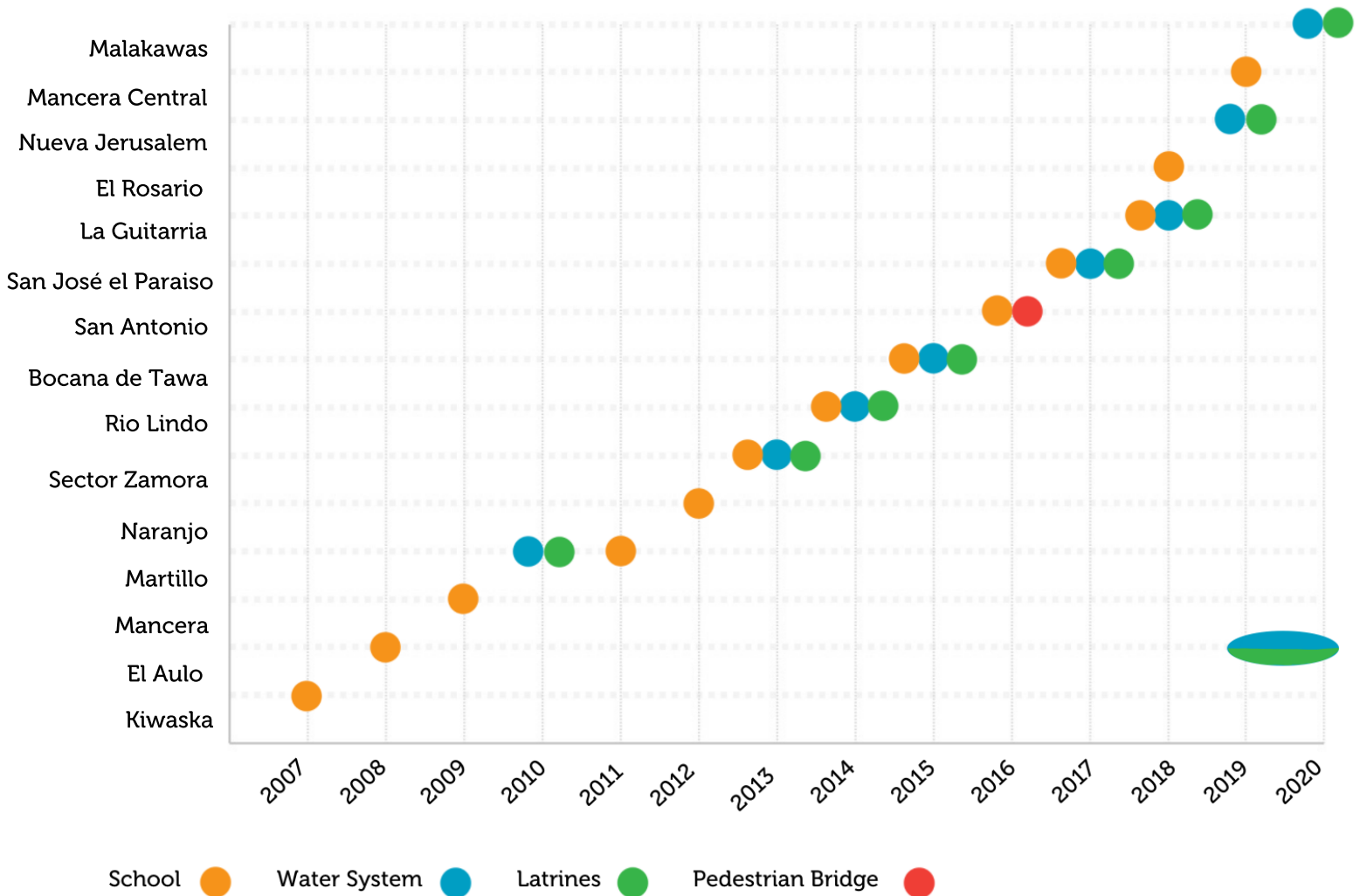
Students who have studied in  
**schools** we've helped build

2,319

Individuals who now have  
**clean water** in their homes

342

Families who now have  
dignified **latrines**



# WATER & LATRINE PROJECT

## EL AULO

*"It's been a long road to getting water to the community of El Aulo in Nicaragua. Twelve years ago Project Schoolhouse partnered with them to build a three-room schoolhouse but we were unable to build a permanent water system due to the complexity of the problem we had to tackle."*

TAB BARKER , DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



In the summer of 2019, we broke ground on the largest water system to date for Project Schoolhouse. It's a massive project which, when complete, laid 6.1 miles of piping in trenches that were dug by hand to bring water to every home in this community.

Every project we complete involves serious problem solving and overcoming difficult logistical hurdles, but this project has been exponentially more difficult, since we began construction in July 2019. One of those obstacles was the spring providing water to the system was damaged through rogue deforestation and would only have been able to provide sufficient water for 9 months of the year. We solved these problems through aggressive reforestation and an innovative hybrid system design that involves both a closed spring capture as well as an open water filtration system to provide additional water capacity during the three dry months of the year. To our knowledge, there isn't another system like this in existence in Nicaragua or further afield.





The tank is nearly double the normal size in order to make the very best use of the closed capture spring water before turning on the open capture water. Even better, the system has very special controls that allow each part of the system to be turned on or off to allow for regular maintenance and water source management.

It took all the savvy we have accumulated in our 14-year history to make this project a reality and we're thrilled that finally, as of the end of 2020, the community of El Aulo has a reliable and clean water source after years of carrying water by hand.

To break this down, our most common method to harness spring water is to completely seal in the underground water source. This allows us to capture 100% of the spring water, which is already clean and free from contaminants, and keep it clean inside a closed system. This is by far the best way to harness water and most of our systems are built like this.

The other way to harness water is to collect surface water with a small dam and then run it through a series of filtration structures to clean it. In El Aulo, we utilized both of these methods to ensure sufficient water to the community for a 30-year design spec accounting for population growth.

This particular open capture is, in our opinion, a work of art and science. Our lead engineer is one of the most respected water engineers in Central America and he built a system that takes water carefully filtered through underground gravel tunnels into another filter of special fabric and special sand. From there it passes through an ultraviolet filtration process, two de-sedimentation tanks, and then through another set of special fabric and sand before passing through a chlorination process. At this point the water is triple filtered, double de-sedimented, ultraviolet treated and chlorinated before being stored in a nearly 80,000-gallon storage tank.





## WATER & LATRINE PROJECT MALAKAWAS

*"Now we don't worry about snakes in the water, having water inside is a big victory. I don't have to carry water. I'm very excited – I love to read, now I have more time."*

/ SELINA, STUDENT  
BOCANA DE TAWA

When the global pandemic hit, Project Schoolhouse reassessed its planned projects for the year, and prioritized clean running water in the homes. In 2020 we built 3 water systems so recipient communities could gain access to clean water where it is needed the most: in the homes.

We collaborated with the community of Malakawas and the municipality of Bocana de Paiwas to build latrines and a new water system for that community. It was the first collaboration with this neighboring municipality. Financially, the mayor contributed 30% of the project cost and used municipal equipment to dredge and grade a temporary road into the community, which is 9 kilometers off the main road.

This little girl no longer has to walk half a mile down a muddy slope to collect water.

We look forward to breaking ground on a school for the community's 60 families in 2021.



# COVID RESPONSE

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*Scholarship students left to right, Fatima, Aner, Cristian*

Much like the rest of the world, we continue to flex our resilience muscles at Project Schoolhouse as we navigate the operating changes needed as a result of the pandemic and scenario plan for the impact of the impending global recession. This is how we responded in Nicaragua to the global pandemic.

## Nicaragua Team:

Project Schoolhouse prepaid staff wages to limit how often our team needed to travel into town to do their banking. Our Project Coordinator was able to advance purchase the construction materials we needed for the two ongoing water projects, limiting community exposure to potential outside carriers of the virus. Fortunately, the work in the communities mostly carried on as normal, remaining outside and socially distanced. We turned on in-home water service to 145 families this year, over 1,000 people, which eliminated the need to congregate at local water holes to collect life-sustaining water.

## Scholarship Students:

Our team worked very hard to support university scholarship students with internet connectivity needed for online learning so they didn't lose a year of schooling. The children we support know that education is the key to their futures and we are grateful to all of you who invest in their futures.

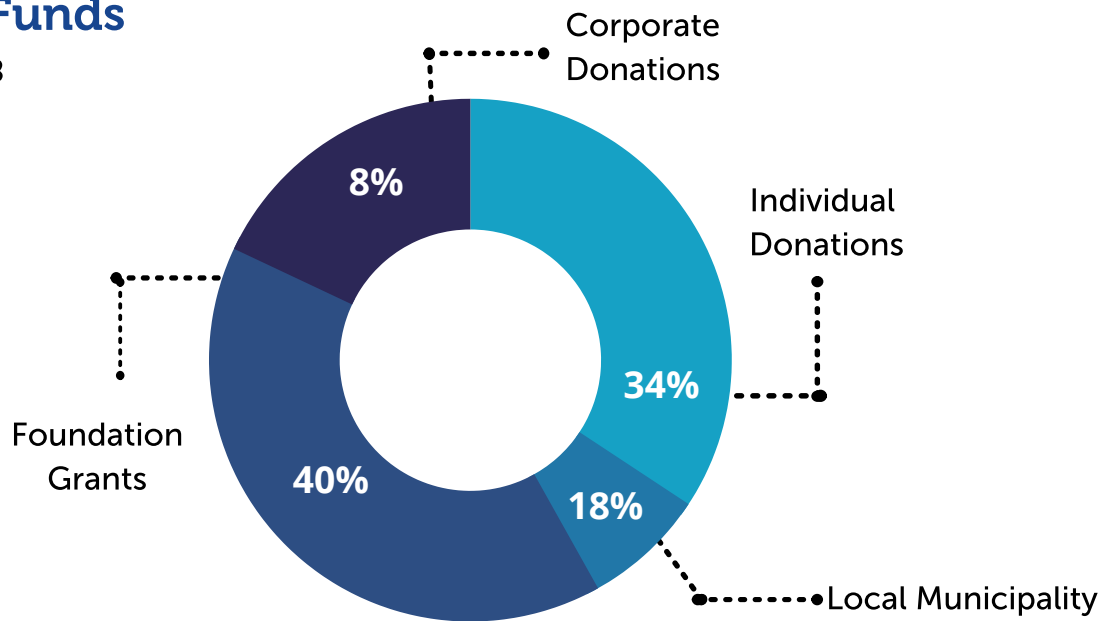
## Laptop Program in El Aulo:

Supported by the Financial Freedom Foundation, each of the students in the community of El Aulo has a laptop for their educational use. This was the only primary school in the area that had the ability to transition to remote learning during the pandemic lockdown.

# 2020 FINANCIALS

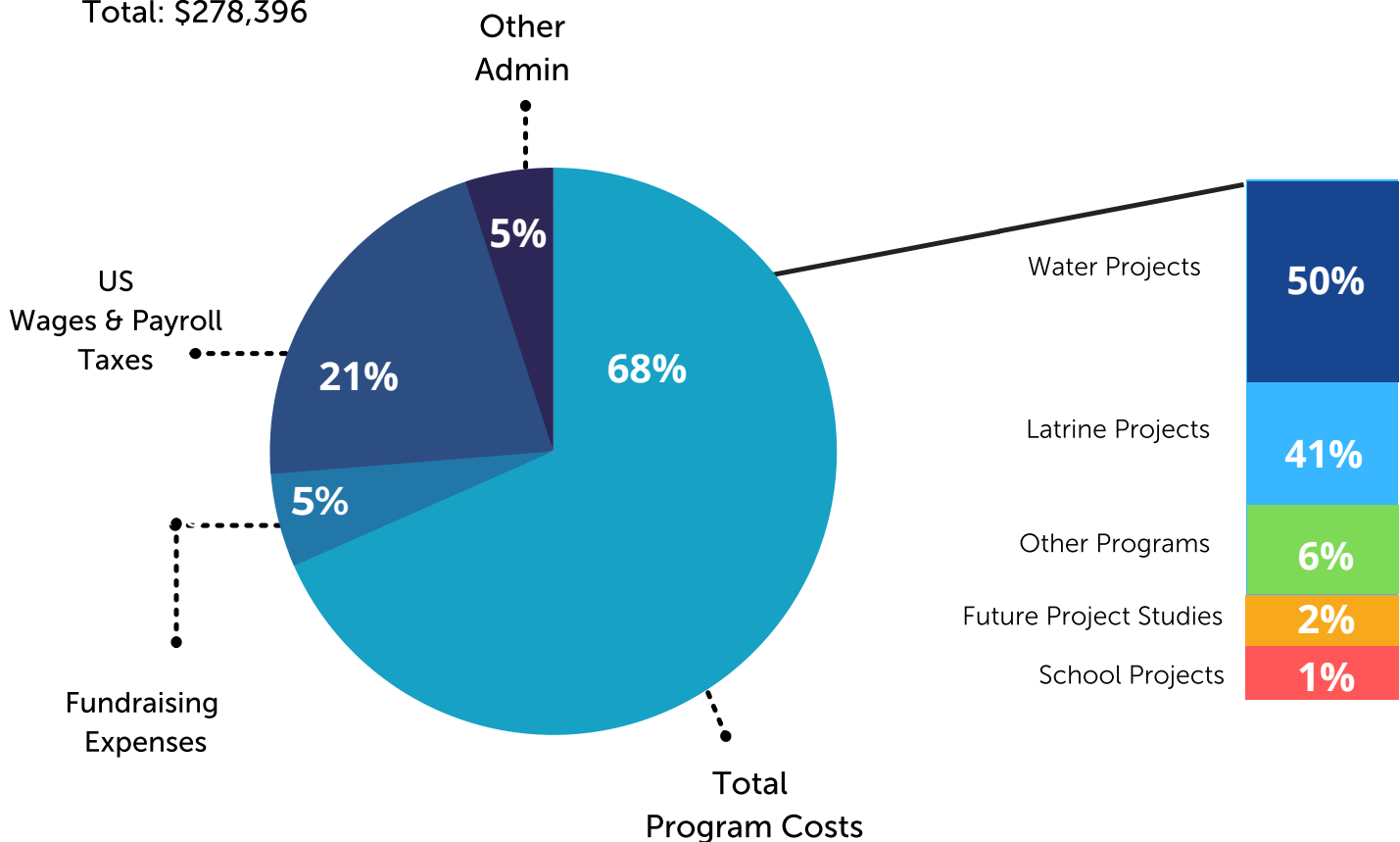
## Source of Funds

Total: \$357,068



## Use of Funds

Total: \$278,396





## AUSTIN & NICARAGUA

# LEADERSHIP

### Board of Directors:

Gene Bosché - President  
 Dennis Passovoy - VP  
 Kris Sloan - Secretary  
 Evan Lambert - Treasurer  
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 Thomas Barker  
 JP Kloninger  
 Amit Motwani  
 Kristen Palmer  
 Selina Serna  
 Sara Wagner

### Advisory Board:

Marilyn Felkner, DrPH  
 Walter Moreau  
 Evan Morgan

### USA Staff:

Selina Serna - Executive Director  
 Thomas Barker - Director of Operations  
 Renata Aleman - Development & Communications

### Nicaragua Staff:

Maria Inés Bracamonte - Project Coordinator  
 Manuel Selva Garcia - Head of Construction  
 Norma Valdez - Programs Coordinator  
 Jairo Selva Garcia - Carpenter  
 Luis Enrique Sanchez - Carpenter  
 Mario Cano Cantarero - Carpenter

"Children used to have to carry water to school from a dirty pozo, would eat lunch with dirty hands as there was no clean water to wash. They were served drinks at school with dirty water every day. Moms used to have to carry water to the school to make lunch.

It is a right to study and make a better future for yourself, make friends, learn to socialize, read and write." - Mari, teacher

San Jose el Paraiso

