



Project Schoolhouse

# 2021 Annual Report

*15 Years of Work*





PROJECT SCHOOLHOUSE:

# *BUILDING FOUNDATIONS FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES*

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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 education.

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

Dear friends,

As I sit down to write this note, it happens to be International Women's Day, and the theme for this year is 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow.' We haven't always called out how we embody this theme in our work, so I thought I would try to do that, just a bit.

In Nicaragua, women lead all our work. Maria Inés handles all the logistics, accounting, payroll and never-ending government paperwork. She's been with the organization since the beginning.



Left to right: Evan Morgan, Advisory Board Member; Maria Inés Bracamonte, Project Coordinator; Selina Serna Executive Director

Norma heads up all programs and coordinates the data collection we need to strategically plan out projects and report back to all of you who invest in these projects. Cristian is the newest member of our team, leading after-school enrichment programs that inspire children in their schooling.

All three women participate in the community organizing that makes these majority volunteer-staffed projects and programs successful. We're careful to engage and include women in all community meetings, trainings and ensure gender-equal participation in the Water and School Boards we support the creation of as part of every school and water project. **It is women and girls who, literally, shoulder the largest burden of hauling water.** We believe that our local female leadership are inspirational for the communities with whom we partner, building towards a more sustainable tomorrow.

We worked in 4 communities in 2021, which was truly amazing and a record for the organization! I invite you to read the details in the project update pages that follow. We are grateful for the individuals, foundations and corporations who made these projects possible. In particular, I'd like to acknowledge The Burdine Johnson Foundation, the Still Water Foundation, Love, Tito's, and the West Austin Rotary Club. We are immensely grateful for your sustaining support.

In 2021 we celebrate our 15th anniversary of work - 16 communities, 14 schoolhouses, 12 water projects, and hundreds of latrines. As Tab wrote in his reflections on the anniversary: *"Project Schoolhouse is fifteen years old and is better positioned than ever to keep fulfilling our mission of delivering education and water projects to communities who are ready to step up and partner with us."*

Gratefully,



# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS

## 15 YEARS OF WORK

It's been 15 years since Project Schoolhouse broke ground on our first school project in a very remote part of Nicaragua. We've been persistent in the years since then and have steadily continued building schools and water systems in that region. 16 communities, 14 schoolhouses, 12 water systems, hundreds of latines, and more to come!

## STEADY GROWTH

In 2021, for the first time ever, we partnered with 4 communities on water and education projects.



Aaron and Adriana, 2021 in-country interns

## INCREASED INVESTMENT

Our growth is made possible by increased investment from a few key foundations who believe in this work, most significantly The Burdine Johnson Foundation, Still Water Foundation, Rotary International and Love, Tito's. We're also grateful for the multi-year pledges from the Cien Amigos Society members which allow us to grow and plan strategically.



Left to right, community member and our builders Mario and Jairo

## NEW AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

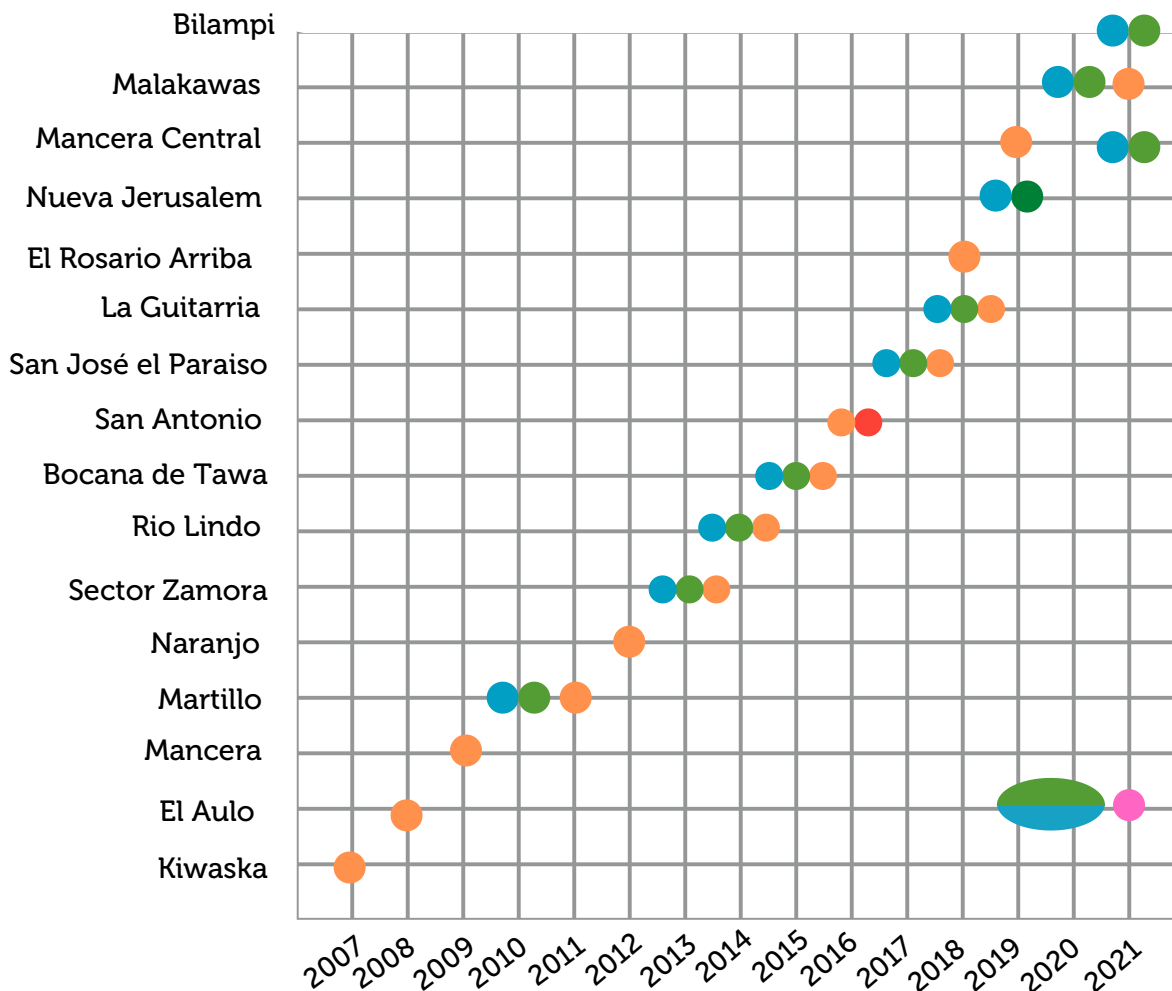
We initiated a new remedial and enrichment program which, sequenced after a water system and school project, has the opportunity to tutor the children who have fallen behind, helping them catch up in their studies and on a path towards educational success.



Cristian in El Aulo helping students enrolled in the after school club



# Celebrating 15 Years of Work



1,900

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

2,436

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

376

Families who now have dignified **latrines**

40

40 **students** benefit from after school programs

Schools ● Water System ● Latrines ● Pedestrian Bridge ● After School Club ●



# WATER & LATRINE PROJECT

## BILAMPI

For our second project in the region of Bocana de Paiwas, we partnered with the community of Bilampi on a water and sanitation project benefiting 43 families. The project was financially supported by the local municipality, West Austin Rotary Club, and Rotary International.

This water system actually pulls water from three different springs, requiring three separate spring captures, and the distribution system is more than 20 km of buried pipe, the largest we have ever tackled. The community volunteers were averaging 100-150 meters of trench digging per day by hand with picks and shovels.



In designing the project, the Project Schoolhouse water engineer described the old water source as the most contaminated he had ever seen, with stagnant water that in recent years has completely dried out for several months out of the year as climate change has impacted previously predictable rain seasons.

This is an effort community members are committed to if it means reliable, safe water for their families. This project continues into 2022.

*"There aren't words. I suffered so much carrying water and lost so much energy and time. It's easier now to clean and do all the things around the house, all with clean water. It's easier for my son; he doesn't go to the stream to bathe. He can go to the bathroom and there's no danger." - Marlene, community member*



# SCHOOL PROJECT MALAKAWAS

*"It's a wondrous thing we did with our own hands. What community could do such a thing. It is a school built to last."*

*Students are more enthusiastic; their education can improve. Knowledge can never be taken away from them."*

*- Sebastian, community member*



The community of Malakawas is 9 kilometers off the main road in the municipality of Bocana de Paiwas.

In 2020, we collaborated with the community and the local municipality to build latrines and a new water system for the 60 families who live in this very remote part of the country.

We continued this partnership in 2021 to build an elementary school and were able to hand over keys to the new building in time for the beginning of the 2022 school year.

In addition to supporting their children's education, we have seen the community organize adult literacy classes so parents and children will both benefit from the beautiful new school. This is just one example of how schoolhouses become the center of the community, with pride for projects they build with their own hands.



# WATER & LATRINE PROJECT

## MANCERA CENTRAL

Mancera Central is the hub for all of the outlying communities in the region, hosting the high school and health clinic for all the surrounding communities. In 2019 we partnered to add a classroom to the high school so the overflow of the student population, who were studying in the rain, could have a dry classroom.

Thanks to a grant from The Burdine Johnson Foundation, we returned to this community in 2021 to complete a fully-distributed water and latrine project, bringing safe water to the homes, school, and the health clinic of the community.

This water project was a difficult spring capture process because the spring is located far up a steep mountain and the materials were difficult to transport.



There were also a large number of suspension bridges needed to traverse complex geography down from the spring. This was back-breaking work and this particular spring capture was more difficult than average. Sometimes springs are easily accessible and not located far from the community they will serve. In Mancera, the spring is two miles up a formidable mountain accessible only via narrow trails.

All the cement, sand, gravel, and pvc had to be carried on horses, mules, and by hand in the hot sun and, sometimes simultaneously, through deep mud.

We are constantly amazed by the level of persistence and hard work dedicated by the families with whom we partner.

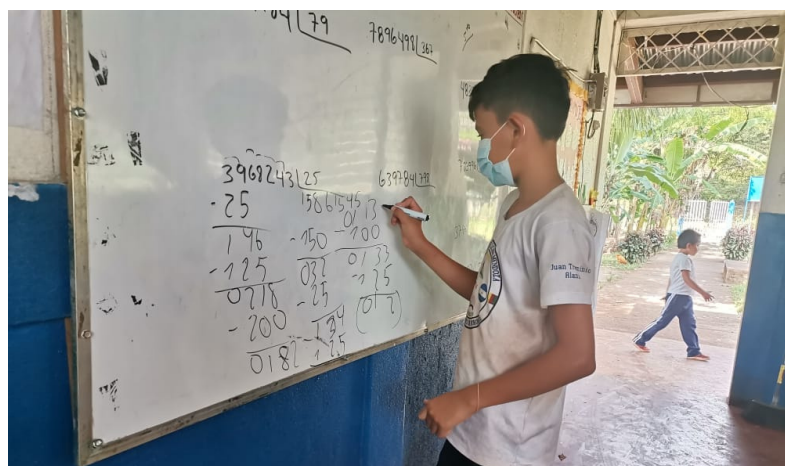


# AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

## EL AULO

In 2021 we initiated an after-school program to provide children with remedial support and enrichment opportunities that encourage them to stay in school. In these under-resourced schools, with typically one teacher for 40 children from grades 1-6 in the same classroom, there is limited opportunity for individual attention. The goal is to create healthy, dynamic, and stimulating environments that respond to students' interests (i.e. sports, arts, academics, leadership and service, science, and technology) and develop core life skills to help them succeed in school and beyond.

These programs are led by university and high school student volunteers from the community, providing role models for the younger children, strengthening the social fabric by mobilizing students, teachers, parents, and volunteers, as partners in development.



The longer-term goals are to see increased school attendance, higher promotion rates, and an increase in adult community engagement in the schools. We are particularly focused on recruiting female university student volunteers to lead the Clubs, providing female role models and encouragement to stay in school.

Sequenced after a water system and school project, the Club provides an opportunity to tutor the children who have fallen behind, helping them catch up in their studies and on a path towards educational success.

The teacher reports better school attendance and test scores after only a few months. We hope to expand this program into additional schools in 2022.





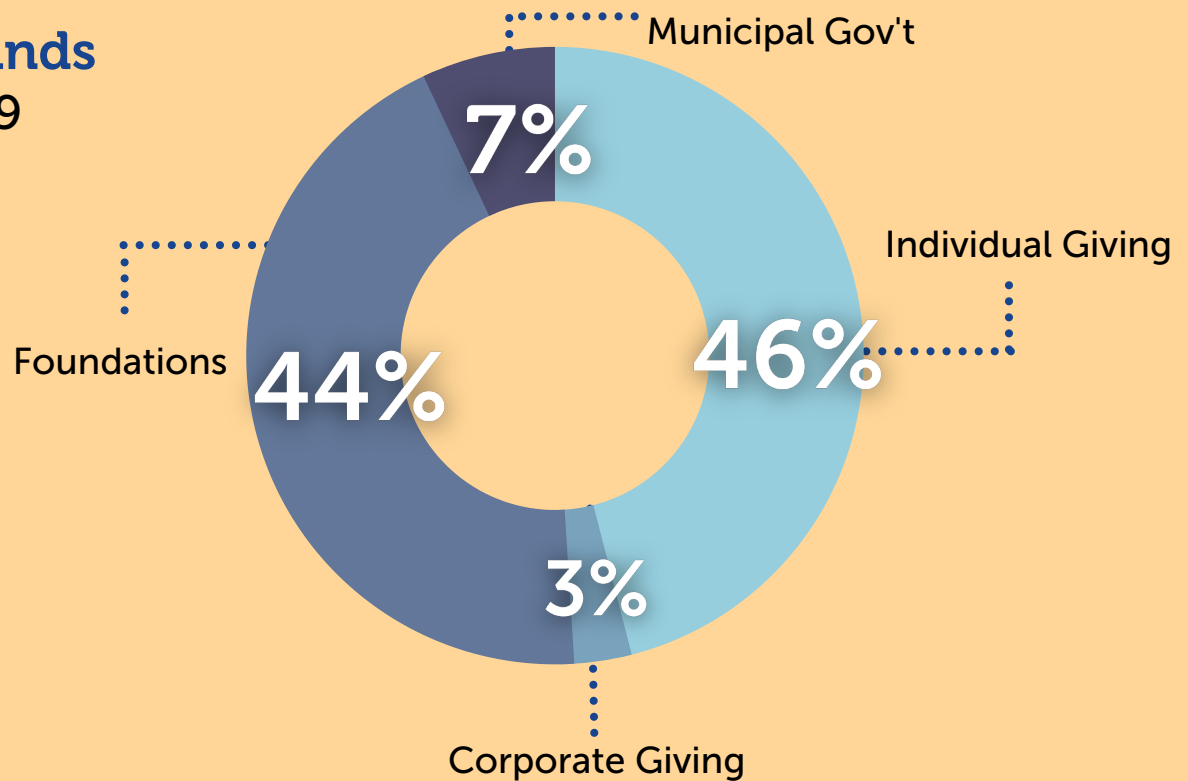
2021

# FINANCIALS



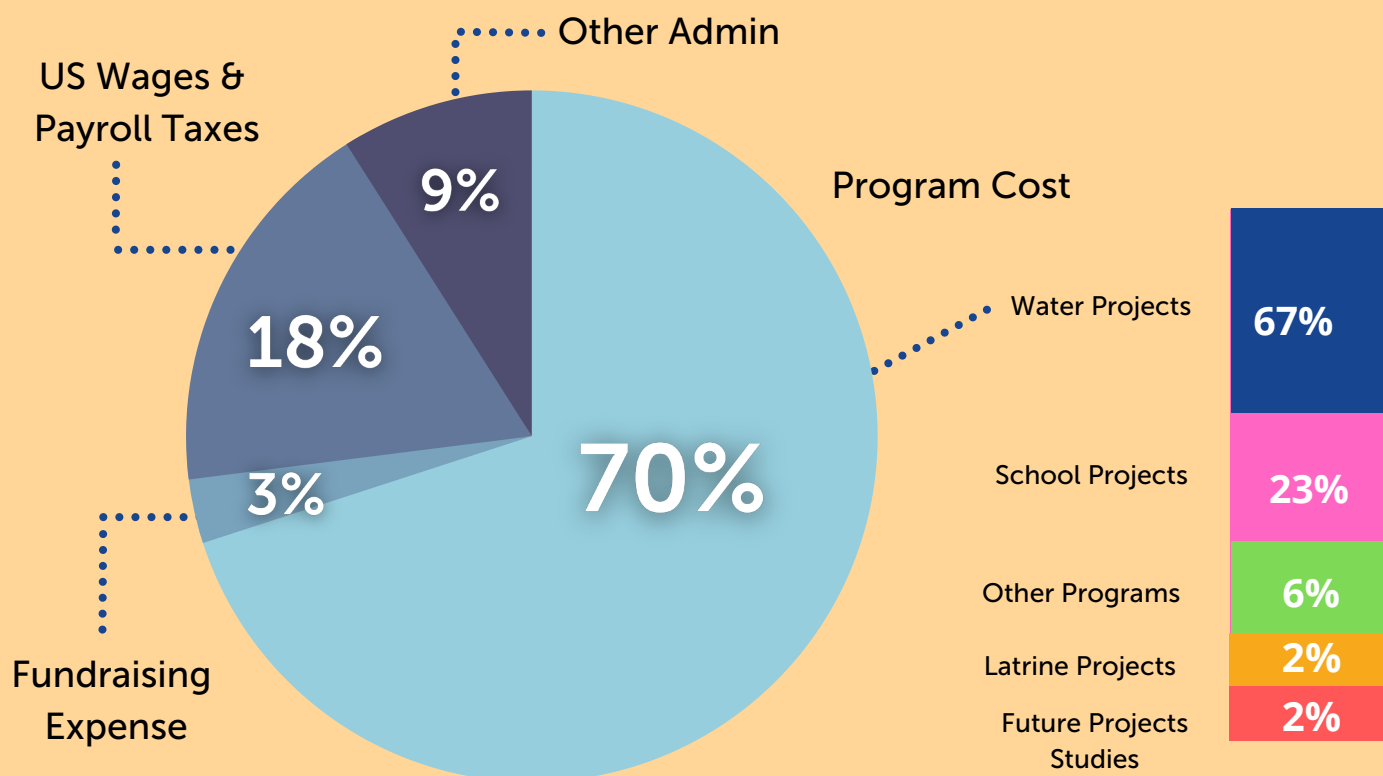
## Source of Funds

Total: \$281,259



## Use of Funds

Total: \$335,870







*Photo: Left to right Maria Inés, Cristian, community member and Norma*

## AUSTIN & NICARAGUA

# LEADERSHIP

### Board of Directors:

Dennis Passovoy - President  
Sara Hesson Wagner - VP  
Gene Bosche - Secretary  
Evan Lambert - Treasurer  
Thomas Barker  
JP Kloninger  
Kristen Palmer  
Angela Salas  
Selina Serna

### Advisory Board:

Cheryl Barker  
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



**"I don't have an education but my granddaughters will. My 3 granddaughters will be educated in the school we're building. I have a little store. I make 400 Cordobas/month (\$12 USD) with my little store. After we have water and a latrine, my dream is to build up my business to help them continue to high school."**

**- Maria, community member**

