



CEPAD
COUNCIL OF PROTESTANT
CHURCHES OF NICARAGUA

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Frequently Asked Questions Leading a Group to Nicaragua through CEPAD

What is CEPAD?

CEPAD stands for the Consejo de Iglesias Evangélicas Pro-Alianza Denominacional or the Nicaraguan Council of Protestant Churches. There are 28 member denominations and pastoral committees throughout Nicaragua. CEPAD grew out of the rubble of the devastating earthquake of 1972 and has been working in emergency relief, rural development and peace building for 45 years, with community development being its focus since the early 1990's. CEPAD relies on and needs support from individuals, church groups and granting organizations. Its delegations program has a long history of receiving volunteer support from Mission Co-Workers from the PCUSA and the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

CEPAD also hosts groups of North Americans and Europeans, providing an educational and relationship-building experience, while also allowing time for US people to be of service. We do this because we believe that the long-term development of Nicaragua depends on building relationships that changes lives.

What does CEPAD Nehemías provide for a group like ours?

1. All meals and lodging, both at our guest facility in Managua and in Nicaraguan homes in rural communities and small towns all over the country.
2. All ground transport, including from and to the airport.
3. All translation (team participants who are bilingual are encouraged to help).
4. All programing, including presentations, activities, work opportunities, etc. You are welcome to provide Bible studies or theological reflections or, at your request, we may be able to do this for you. We attempt to build the program based on the group's interests and program goals, but a high value for CEPAD, and one that is reflected in every visit, is the opportunity to visit a community in which CEPAD is working and, often, one in which it previously worked.



What do I need to provide?

1. A group of 7 or more people (students, faculty, leaders, church groups, yourself, etc.)
2. Whatever group-building and organizational work is needed in your congregation, group or campus.
3. Your own flight arrangements to Nicaragua.
4. Consideration of tips for certain CEPAD staff. We also strongly encourage you to share a charitable financial contribution with CEPAD. Whether it is \$5,000 or \$500, every gift is multiplied ten-fold in Nicaragua.

What might a group do in Nicaragua?

A typical program includes:

1. Listen to presentations on the history of Nicaragua and the current political-economic situation to orient you to the country.
2. Tour Managua.
3. Learn about and possibly observe the development work of CEPAD and other organizations (depending on the specific interests of the delegation).
4. Visit the countryside where team participants share meals and life with local families.
5. Work side-by-side with community members.
6. Enjoy a “tour day” to visit some of Nicaragua’s sites of natural beauty or historic interest and to shop for souvenirs.

If your church or group has a special interest in children, women, health, environment, etc., and wish to focus your learning and energies in one of these areas, please let your delegation leader know.

Will the group participants be safe?

Nicaragua is generally a very safe country, with the lowest crime rates and least police corruption of any country in Central America. CEPAD has been hosting US delegations since the 1980’s and has never had anyone injured by any hostile act or serious accident (even during war years). Recent delegations have included intergenerational groups, student groups or interest affinity.

Where will we stay?

In Managua, CEPAD operates the CEPAD Nehemías Guest House and Conference Center, with a cook and kitchen and sleeping capacity for 60 people. Each room holds 4-6 people with bathrooms, typically, but not always, shared with other rooms.



In rural communities, delegates frequently stay in homes with families using a sleeping pad or foam mattress. There will probably be outdoor latrines and “dip-and pour” showers. Another option is to stay together as a group in the communities, usually sleeping in a school, church or community building.

How much does it cost?

The current cost for a CEPAD delegation depends on the size of the group. The costs below are what most groups pay, with the caveat (noted above) that we would like you to consider giving a charitable contribution to CEPAD and tips to some of its staff. Further, if you hope to work with the community on something of benefit to them during your visit, please open the ‘Potential Projects’ link in the “Resources” page of our website. The per diem cost structure below is calculated on the total number of nights (not days) in which you will be hosted by CEPAD, whether at our Managua guesthouse or staying with a community. Groups that are in Managua for a longer time or that incur extra costs for hotels will be charged more. We will work out these costs for you as far in advance as possible. The cost structure below should always be confirmed with the Nehemías Program Director, Anita Taylor, and if you are planning a trip for a subsequent year, anticipate a possible increase.

- Groups over 13 - \$90 per person per night
- Groups of 10-12 - \$95 per person per night
- Groups of 7-9 - \$100 per person per night

PLEASE NOTE: For groups smaller than 7 people, we will determine a cost based on what the group wants to do and where they want to go. For groups going to the Rio San Juan or the Atlantic Coast, the cost will also be higher.

Note - as of 2017 we are no longer accepting new medical/dental groups. The Ministry of Health in Nicaragua has made the process of approval for these teams increasingly difficult. At the moment, we encourage groups to share their gifts and talents in ways not related to direct provision of medical and dental services.

The amount covers all program planning, advance trips to the communities, food, lodging, ground transportation, translation, etc. with the exception of tips. Other personal expenses include your airfare, a \$10 Nicaraguan Entrance Visa, and anything you want for your own snacks and souvenirs.

Is it difficult to send money to Nicaragua?

Because of possible complications, CEPAD has established an account in the United States. A check can be mailed easily and securely to this account, which makes paying for your delegation or making a charitable contribution very easy.



What about the materials cost for work projects?

Currently, most of CEPAD's budgeted money is going for education in things like sustainable agriculture, leadership development and family development, not for construction projects. If your group wants to work on such projects, many of the communities where we work are looking for your help and, as noted above in the 'Potential Projects' link, CEPAD has outlined four standing needs in the communities in which we work along with associated project costs.

What kind of work will we be doing?

Groups who want to work are invited to consider the options set forth in the 'Potential Projects' portfolio - projects that are needed in most of our communities and that have been given approval by CEPAD. In coordination with your CEPAD delegation coordinator, you can discuss the greatest current need among these four options with the leadership committee of the community you will visit.

Our group is more interested in learning than working, do we have to work?

Absolutely not! Many groups return to the same communities each year, within a 5-year cycle, to see friends. Others come on thematic delegations around a specific theme such as CEPAD's model for community development, the impacts of foreign policies and international economics on Nicaragua, food security, children's issues, women's issues and other topics.

How far in advance do I need to begin planning?

We would like as much time to plan as possible, since some months of the year tend to fill up quickly. It is best to schedule a year in advance, but we can receive a group with much less notice. CEPAD staff have seasons where they are primarily accompanying teams and have little or no access to email. These times tend to be January-March and June-July. Delegations staff work many weekends and holidays throughout the year. As a result, they tend to take a number of comp days in late November and early December. From mid-December to January 6, the CEPAD office is closed. During these periods, it can be difficult to communicate with your CEPAD contact, so plan on working closely with them during the remaining months of the year. It is advisable to always use the following two email address in your communications with us: partners@cepad.org.ni and nehemias@cepad.org.ni. The 'Partners' address is a shared email address by our delegation hosts and the 'Nehemías' address is that of Anita Taylor, the delegations team supervisor.