



CEPAD
COUNCIL OF PROTESTANT
CHURCHES OF NICARAGUA

De la Rotonda El Periodista
200 metros al sur, 100 metros al este
Managua, Nicaragua 2266-5216

USA Tel: 207-922-9849 | info@cepadusa.org

Delegate Information Packet

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About CEPAD

The Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua (CEPAD) is a non-governmental, Christian organization founded in December of 1972, just days after an earthquake destroyed Managua. The initial efforts of CEPAD were aimed at providing emergency relief such as food and shelter to earthquake survivors. Once CEPAD's founders saw the impact that protestant denominations working together could have, they decided to continue working the following ways: (1) a council of protestant churches to collaborate together, (2) a disaster relief agency and (3) a development organization (its core work).

1. A Council of Churches

CEPAD's General Assembly is comprised of representatives from 28 protestant denominations. The vernal assembly meets bi-monthly to participate in leadership training, Biblical reflection, analysis of current events and to receive updates on the state of CEPAD's work in Nicaragua.

2. Disaster Relief

When natural disasters affect Nicaragua, CEPAD continues to act as a vital, internationally-respected channel for humanitarian relief and aid to disaster survivors.

3. Development Work

Leadership Development:

- **Community Leaders:** Leaders in the community receive training from CEPAD in leadership and community organization so they can develop new resources and work with the local government to achieve their goals. Leaders create a forma committee that identifies community needs and creates strategies to meet them. In each five year period, we train more than 250 leaders who advocate for infrastructure projects such as road repair, electricity and communal wells. These committee members also serve as leaders in the communities as main points of contact for CEPAD.
- **Youth Leadership:** Children and youth who participate in CEPAD's youth programs learn skills like public speaking, leadership and care for the environment. They play sports, create art and develop self-esteem. The women and older teens who lead these programs in each community receive training to identify children at risk for violence in the home, drug and alcohol use and low school achievements so they can give special attention to those participants.



- **Domestic Violence Protection:** Violence against women is the number one crime in rural Nicaragua. CEPAD teaches women in our partner communities about their rights and gives them tools to escape violent homes and help their friends and family members do the same.
- **Pastoral Leadership Training:** Pastors serve as community leaders in areas without formal government structures. From 2009-2014, we worked with 180 pastors and created 18 pastoral committees. CEPAD provides practical workshops and self-study programs in theology to pastors and their congregations. Pastors, leaders and congregants select topics such as stewardship of creation, domestic violence, self-esteem and working with youth.

Women's Economic Development:

Women contribute economically to some households in rural Nicaragua and many homes are lead by single mothers. CEPAD provides training for women in farming techniques, organizes and funds community banks and teaches other trades, which allow women to provide for themselves and their families.

- **Community Banking:** CEPAD helps women to organize community banks where 7-8 women come together to become financially literate through training and then take out a loan together. By taking out a group loan, there is greater accountability as each member is responsible to pay her piece of the loan on time. These loans are used to invest in women's small businesses. For example, one woman may need the credit to purchase food in bulk to sell it at a higher price in her village to easily repay the loan and make money through her sales.
- **Work Training Centers:** Many women in rural villages have expressed the need to learn new skills they can use to market or make things to sell. In 2015, CEPAD began a new project to give women the opportunity to come together in groups to learn how to make piñatas, jewelry and typical Nicaraguan foods, items which they can market in their communities. Through building community, learning a trade and sharing their experiences, women also boost their self-esteem.
- **Patio Project:** Through this project, CEPAD provides women with financing to purchase pigs and chickens to raise and reproduce in their backyards. The women use these pigs and chickens to sell in their communities to increase their incomes, and they are also eaten so families have access to animal proteins in their diets, something that is often lacking in rural homes.



Food Security and Care for the Environment:

CEPAD works with small farmers to increase food production, improve economies and protect natural resources. We promote organic techniques and train producers with very small farms (usually fewer than five acres) to implement them. We train at least five farmers in each community to make their own fertilizer, diversify crops, avoid chemical pesticides and use water efficiently. Each farmer then teaches five more community members the techniques they learned from CEPAD. In three years, farmers transition from growing only staple crops like beans and corn to producing up to 25 varieties of fruits, vegetables and wood trees.

Primary and Secondary Education:

CEPAD runs a primary and secondary school in Leon, Nicaragua, el Instituto Marcos Antonio Mendieta Roja (the Marcos Mendieta School). This school provides both regular and weekend classes for students to help them excel and graduate in a country where only a very small percentage of students ever reach the sixth grade. The school has about 200 graduates per year and is self-sustaining.

Radio CEPAD:

Radio CEPAD offers a daily broadcast of news, sports, interviews, biblical study and reflection that reaches almost the entire Pacific region of Nicaragua. Its programming speaks in favor of the poorest and most vulnerable members of the population and emphasizes gender equality, care for the environment, human rights and community action. The station broadcasts on the AM dial from 5 am to 6 pm and online at www.radiocepad.org, and is self-sustaining.

Refugee Support:

CEPAD partners with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees to provide legal assistance and material support to vulnerable individuals and families in the process of integration. Most refugees come to Nicaragua from our neighbors: Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador to escape drug and gang violence. The number of refugees to Nicaragua continues to rise, and CEPAD is proud to support the U.N.'s efforts to provide families with new beginnings.

International Partnership and Solidarity:

CEPAD hosts groups to create a transformative experience here in Nicaragua to facilitate relationships. After groups get oriented to Nicaragua's history and challenges



at our Nehemías Guest House in Managua, we typically take them to one of our rural partnership communities where they get firsthand understanding of rural life. Relationship building is a priority for groups and especially those who, over time, decide they might like to move to a longer term partnership with CEPAD as an organization or with one of the communities in which CEPAD works. We can tailor a trip to any age and service inclination, and we host Christian groups as well as secular groups like universities. We work with 30 or more groups per year, varying from delegation trips, our long-term partnership groups and groups visiting Nicaragua through other organizations like Living Waters for the World.



Travel, Logistics and Contact Information

Time: Nicaragua is on Central Standard Time, but is on Mountain Time during Daylight Savings.

Contact Information:

Anita Taylor, Director of Delegation and Partnership Office 8855-2304
nehemias@cepad.org.ni

Luis Vásquez, Delegation Coordinator 8987-8536 partners@cepad.org.ni

Yemila Exteny, Delegation Coordinator 8901-6902 partners@cepad.org.ni

Deybis Sanchez, Delegation Coordinator 5737-5908 partners@cepad.org.ni

Passports and Airline Documents:

Each person should have a valid passport with at least six months left before it expires. Each delegate should bring 2 copies of the first two pages of each passport in case a passport is lost. Share one copy with your group leader.

On the airplane, each person will receive an entry form to be completed. For the Nicaragua address, put: CEPAD, de Rotonda Periodista, 200 M. Al sur, 200 M. Arriba.

Arrival at Augusto Sandino International Airport in Managua:

Hold on to the luggage stubs that your airline gives you when you depart. After collecting your luggage, stubs are to be presented to the customs agent who may want to look in some of the bags. Usually they use a “red-light/green-light” random checking system. If you get the “green”, you can go. If you get the “red”, they will check your bags. If any baggage is missing, report it to the airline representative in the baggage claim area who will fill out a report. Get a copy of the report and keep your claim stubs.

As you pass through customs, a \$10 tourist visa will be collected. The local currency, the Cordoba, cannot be used to pay this entrance fee.

One or more of the CEPAD Delegations Team staff will await you outside of customs at the airport. A bus or microbus will bring you to the CEPAD Nehemías Center, but in the event of unforeseen circumstances, taxi directions and numbers for CEPAD are: de la Rotonda el Periodista, 200 varas al sur, 200 varas arriba, contiguo a la Universidad del Valle. CEPAD Nehemías Guest House (NGH), tel: 2270-5017 or 2270-5018, but calling the cellphone of a CEPAD staff person will be more effective.



Health Preparation for Travel to Nicaragua

Note: Find the latest information on health-related information for travel to Nicaragua from the Center for Disease Control website or by contacting your local traveler medicine health clinic.

International travel to a hot, tropical climate is physically demanding. People with health problems or physical limitations may experience some discomfort.

Malaria Prevention:

- Mosquito repellent, long sleeves and long pants for the evenings.
- Medication, possibly, in consultation with your travel medicine physician.

General Medication:

- Aspirin/ibuprofen/acetaminophen (Tylenol)
- Benadryl/Sudafed
- Antibiotic ointment
- Band-Aids
- Dramamine or some motion sickness remedy if you are predisposed to car sickness. Nicaragua's inland roads are difficult for some to tolerate.

For diarrhea and gastrointestinal upsets, it is recommended to bring:

- Pepto Bismol
- Immodium tablets (to be taken **only** in cases of severe diarrhea)
- Should your doctor concur, a prescription for Ciprofloxacin 500 msg, 10 tablets in case you develop bacterial diarrhea.

Note: bring any medications you take regularly. Prescriptions are difficult to fill here.



Packing List

Nicaraguans take pride in what they wear. How you dress can be simple; however, what you wear will reflect not only how Nicaraguans perceive you, but also how they perceive your group and North Americans in general.

Carry-On Bags

In flight to Nicaragua, please wear your most comfortable shoes and clothing in case your luggage arrives late. Pack your essentials, i.e. toiletries, medications, documents and at least one change of clothing in a carry-on bag. Keep anything of value with you. It is recommended to leave valuables at home, including smart phones. Also carry with you the following:

- Passport and 2 photocopies of the initial 2 pages of your passport (leave an extra copy at home)
- Emergency phone numbers, including CEPAD's Nehemías Office numbers, 011-505-2270-5017, 011-505-2270-5018, 011-505-8882-5840 and the numbers of your CEPAD delegation staff coordinator
- Spending money (cash, not traveler's checks) of at least \$35 for small gifts, soft drinks, etc. Bring small bills. US currency is accepted here, though your change will be in Cordobas. If you plan to buy larger items, you will want to bring more. The best variety of souvenirs and handicrafts can be found and purchased at the airport before you return to the US. CEPAD recommends money belts for those carrying large amounts of money.

Checked Bags

Make a list of contents of each bag with a description of the bag in case it is lost. In case of lost luggage, it is possible to buy replacement clothing and toiletries in Managua.

If you will be staying in the countryside, you may pack your checked bags with two different categories of items: one for general use in country and city, and one for the country only.



Be sure to bring the following:

- Clothing for warm to very hot weather
- Sandals, flip flops (shower shoes) and walking shoes (tennis shoes are fine)
- Modest shorts and bathing suit (if recreation day involves swimming). Pants for women are acceptable in most situations.
- Soap, shampoo, hand towel and toiletries (these are generally not provided at the CEPAD Nehemías Center.
- Toilet paper
- Water bottle, one liter size or larger (a wide mouth is essential to refill from large purified water bottles. Minimum size 28 oz.)
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Flashlight and batteries
- Notebook/Journal - several people should bring Bibles
 - Optional: photos of friends & family, but required if doing a homestay
- Light jacket or sweater for mountainous regions
- Bath towel
- Sleeping bag or fitted and top sheet
- Rain coat or poncho (depending on region and time of year)
- Hiking shoes/boots, sturdy tennis shoes are fine
- Snack food



Accommodations and Transportation

In Managua

Unless other arrangements are made, delegations will stay at the CEPAD Nehemías Guest House. It is a humble and clean place. Usually three or four people share a room with a shared hall bath. Sheets and towels are provided at the guest house only. You are free to use any bathroom in the center. For non-shower use, the two largest bathrooms (and most comfortable) are in the hallway to the right of the living room/tv space. Closed doors to bathrooms do not necessarily indicate that they are occupied. All tissue must be thrown in waste cans rather than toilets. Be sure to hold the handle down to ensure optimal flushing.

Outside of Managua

When traveling out of Managua, you may be staying with host families. In the home stays, you will probably have your own foam mattress that will be transported from CEPAD in Managua to your destination. The bathroom facility may be an outdoor latrine. Please be sure to bring toilet paper, a sleeping bag or sleep sack. Also bring a fitted mattress sheet (single size) for your foam mattress.

A Note on Gift-Giving in Homestays

When staying with families, we do not recommend giving expensive gifts or leaving personal items such as clothing. What you leave behind has a lasting impact on that family, the community and the CEPAD Nehemías Delegations Program in general. You may leave postcards of your hometown or a nearby city, photographs of your family or church, a thank you note or perhaps a bar of soap or chocolate.

Transportation

Transportation is usually by chartered bus or van, although occasionally we ride in smaller four-wheel drive vehicles.

Health, Safety and Culture

Documents: Please carry a copy of your passport with you at all times. Your original passport should be deposited at the CEPAD Nehemías Center for safekeeping.

Water and Staying Healthy: Water in Managua is relatively safe to drink, but it is best to drink purified water. CEPAD Nehemías keeps purified water in the big water bottle in the dining area. You can fill your bottle there. If the bottle is empty or near empty, please notify a CEPAD delegations member. When you leave the Center, take your wide-mouthed water bottle with you. Drink plenty of fluids during the day to prevent dehydration. Hand sanitizer is effective, but it is preferable to wash your hands with water and soap often and thoroughly. Hand sanitizer should be used as a secondary step. Be sure your host families use the purified water CEPAD gives them to prepare food and to wash dishes. It is your responsibility to do everything you can to ensure your health while recognizing that some intestinal issues or dehydration will affect some members of almost every team, if only for a portion of a day.

Plumbing: With any flush toilet, please throw toilet paper in the waste basket rather than the toilet bowl. Always carry paper with you. In the community where you may travel, you will most likely be using latrines. Sometimes families have a box or trash bin for paper while others will throw paper into the latrine. For bathing in the countryside, expect to take a “dip and pour” bath using a bucket or barrel of water and a small bowl dipping. Do Not put anything dirty or soapy into the water recipient. This is also true for the wash-board and water-cistern system so that you do not dirty the water.

Security: Managua, like most large metropolitan cities, is NOT a safe place to walk around alone at night. Please take precautions as in any other large city. Even, perhaps especially, when you are in a large group accompanied by CEPAD staff, be safe.

- Carry only necessary items.
- Guard your pockets, wallets, cameras, jewelry, watches, etc.
- Keep money out of sight.
- Be careful crossing the streets; in Nicaragua, CARS always have the right of way. NOT pedestrians.

Photos: Generally, pictures can be taken anywhere except military installations. It's courteous to ask individuals before taking their picture. They probably won't mind.

Gifts: Do not hand out trinkets or money to children. If you give to one, you are likely to be mobbed by many more. But more importantly, you will want to help the Nicaraguans in their efforts not to make beggars out of their children, and people from the North to break away from the “Santa Claus” image prompted by gringo handouts. When



tempted, as a general rule, resist. Even when confronted by a new and sometimes overwhelming situation, it is usually best to lead with your head rather than your heart.

Donations: If you should feel moved to make a contribution to a CEPAD program or any other program, please speak with Damaris Albuquerque, CEPAD's executive director, Anita Taylor, the CEPAD Nehemías Program Director or the North American Mission Co-Worker. Please do not leave items in the communities where you are staying or make promises that you personally cannot keep. Many times suggested donations require that CEPAD spans many hours of follow-up time and many kilometers of driving.

Tips: As a team, you are encouraged to consider a tip for your Nicaraguan delegation host(s) and to your driver in addition to a group tip for a few other CEPAD staff who work behind the scenes to keep you safe and keep your rooms clean. You are not required to tip, but it makes a big difference for your Nicaraguan CEPAD hosts and is very appreciated. Please give all tips to the delegations office (to Anita Taylor) or, in her absence, to your primary delegation host. A tip for the US Presbyterian Mission Co-Worker delegation host is *never* appropriate.

Money: The Nicaraguan currency is the Cordoba, but dollars are accepted everywhere. Bring small bills to avoid changing money. Bringing your own snacks can help save time on the road when we stop for bathroom breaks.

Laundry: If you have clothes that need to be washed, please let us know. In the CEPAD Nehemías Center we can sometimes wash clothes for a small fee if the facility is not too full. Expect about a day in turnaround time, assuming the is out for line drying the clothes. Clothes can also be washed by hand in a community (by you, which can be a great learning experience) during a homestay.

Alcohol: The Nehemías Center is an educational center as such, is a non-smoking, non-alcohol facility. Please help us to respect that. It is even more important to be vigilant about drinking when we are visiting communities, because the people with whom we work in the communities are mostly members of Evangelical churches who believe that drinking is a serious sin. Let's not offend our friends.

Transportation: Our staff will help if you need a taxi. It's best to agree on charges before you get in. If you have bills larger than 50 Córdoba, ask if the driver has change. Typically you should not have a need to be taking a taxi at any point. Generally you should never travel without the accompaniment of a CEPAD staff person. You should never travel or walk alone, and taking taxis is generally a last resort.



Health: If you have health problems or are on medication, PLEASE LET THE DELEGATION COORDINATORS KNOW. Most people visiting Nicaragua stay well and energized in spite of the heat, full schedule, change of water, etc. Should you feel ill, please advise us. Plan to skip a meeting if you are too tired or not feeling well.

Should you get diarrhea, take only Pepto Bismol at first, NOT IMODIUM. Drink lots of fluids and rest, try to keep eating and see a staff person. Resting and staying hydrated are important measures in preventing and recovering from any illness.

Do not go barefoot: wear shower sandals and shake out your shoes and sleeping bags for scorpions. Scorpions sting like a bee but their sting is not fatal, though it will leave you fairly incapacitated for 12 hours. They like to hide in cars places, including shoes and clothes left on floors.

Addresses: Street addresses in Managua are described from a reference point in a particular neighborhood, and then costing the number of blocks (cuadras) east (arriba), west (abajo), north (al lago) or south (al sur). For example, the address for CEPAD Nehemías is De la Rotonda El Periodista, 200 varías al sur, 200 varías arriba, continuo a la Universidad del Valle. A “vara” is roughly equal to a yard.

Telephone: For international calls, when possible, use FaceTime or Skype, remembering that through Skype you can also call cell phones or landlines for a small fee if you have established a prepaid Skype account or have a credit card associated with it. You are discouraged from bringing a smartphone so ask a delegation host to access a computer or their phone should it be important to call the USA.

Cultural Hints: In Latin America, greetings are an important gesture of communication and they are very defined. You generally stand up, extend your hand for a handshake and say “mucho gusto” (nice to meet you) followed by giving your own name. Shake hands again when you say good-bye.

In the city, women are commonly greeted with a kiss on the cheek. In the country, a mutual “arm-pat” might be in order.