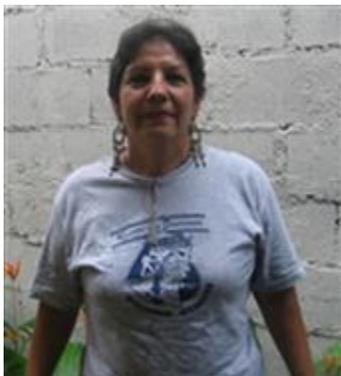


## Learning Center Project Update

### *Sewing machines sent from Wisconsin and the impact*

The official project of learning to clean and repair sewing machines began in December 11-21, 2006, following training provided by Norm Barber, Stevens Point. The objective was to teach 12 people (both women and men) in the cleaning, repair and maintenance of sewing machines. The project benefits not only the Learning Centers, but also provides a skill to the people that reside within these communities. The initial participants were volunteers in the workshop, taught by Moises Guillen, in the repair and cleaning of sewing machines in the warehouse waiting for distribution to the Learning Centers.

Sandra Boniche was in the first sewing machine repair workshop, and the following are some of her translated comments from the initial workshop she attended in 2007: *“I found this course to be very good and with practice I learned it very easily. I learned how to correctly stitch, to dismantle, and to differentiate machines. I also learned, to oil the machine, to change and clean the piece, and that machines needs to be watched with much care. I plan to repair my own machine and to teach to those in need. We all learned very well to share what we learned.”*



**Sandra  
Boniche**  
(comentario personal)

Me parece muy bueno porque por medio de proyecto Chica Nica aprendí a coser y me destaque haciendo vestidos. *I think the Chica Nica Project is great because I learned how to sew and I stand out making doll dresses.*

Mi logro personal es que ahora fabrico mis propios vestidos los de mis hijos y nietos y ropita para vender y tengo mi pequeño negocio y aprendí a REPARAR MAQUINAS DE COSER.

*My personal accomplishment is that I make my own dresses, my children and grandchildren. I have my own clothes-making business and always have clothes for sale. Another skill that I learned is how to repair sewing machines.*

El Impacto del Proyecto ha despertado el interés de aprender en las mujeres participantes, algunas quieren hacer sus productos y tener su propia tiendita, hay solidaridad, no compartimos los propios diseños.

*The impact of the Project has awakened up the interest to learn in the participants women. Some of them want to make their own products and have their own store. There is solidarity among us and we shared our own designs.*

El consejo que les doy a todas es aprender siempre se puede si se pone interés pueden ser independientes y ocupar su tiempo para liberar el estrés y mejorar la economía en el hogar.

*The advice that I have for all the women is to learn as long as the opportunity is available, if they all put interest in learning they can be independent and invest their time to free the stress and improve the economy of their homes.*



**Guadalupe  
Nuñez**  
(comentario personal)

Bueno primera vez estoy en un Proyecto que se dedica a las mujeres ya que he aprendido a bordar en seda y Crochet, perfeccioné la elaboración de vestidos de muñeca y de niñas, y también compartir con otras compañeras. Como logro personal he cumplido un sueño desde niña que a pesar que no me gustaba la costura he aprendido a “ BORDAR “ Y ELABORAR PATRONES. *Well, this is the first time I am part of a Project dedicated to women, I have learned embroidery in silk done with sewing machine and also crochet. I improved the doll dress making and girl dresses. As a personal accomplishment, it has come true the dream I had since I was a little girl, despite I didn't like sewing, I have learned to do embroidery and make patterns.*

El Impacto del proyecto es que mas mujeres desean aprender y participar del Proyecto lo que hace hacer cambios en la vida de cada una.

*The impact of the project is that more women wish to learn and participate of this Project that allows us to make changes in each one of our lives.*

Les digo a las compañeras que profundicen sus conocimientos de costura manualidades bordado etc, que se organicen para crear sus propios fondos aprovechando las oportunidades que ofrece la Organización Wisconsin y Compañeros a y través de los Centros de Aprendizajes.

*I tell the women that they improve their knowledge about sewing, handcrafts, embroidery, etc. To be organized to be able to create their own revolving funds and take the opportunities offered by Wisconsin and Compañeros through the Learning Centers.*

**Sandra moved on from being a student in the sewing machine repair class to teaching the skill at the Managua Office**



**New skills open doors, in addition to being a Chica Nica sewer, other opportunities followed:**

En Enero 2012 Sandra y Guadalupe Nuñez tuvieron su primera experiencia de trabajo con contrato, confeccionaron dos docenas de cotonas y faldas de folklore para el grupo de danza de la Universidad de Ingeniería de Managua quienes viajaban a Mexico y en su presentación exhibirían sus trajes confeccionados por manos de estas dos maravillosas y talentosas mujeres Nicas. En este trabajo demostraron sus habilidades de costura y bordado a máquina. Desafortunadamente no tenemos fotos del trabajo hecho pero posiblemente podamos conseguir el contacto para tomar fotos de los trajes. In Jan 2012 Sandra and Guadalupe Nuñez had their first work experience with a contract, they made two dozen typical outfits for a folklore dance for the Dance Group of the University of Engineering of Managua who were traveling to Mexico at the time. The dancers would then exhibit their typical outfits made by the hands of these two marvelous and talented Nicaraguan women. In this work they demonstrated their sewing and machine embroidery skills. Unfortunately they don't have photos of the work done but they will possibly get a contact with the University who would then let them take pictures of the outfits made.



En Nov del 2012, se les presenta una segunda oportunidad. Esta vez fue la habilidad de reparación de máquina que le abrió las puertas a ella y a Guadalupe Nuñez para adquirir un contrato corto de reparación de 150 maquinas de coser en seis colegios públicos de Managua con El MINED (Ministerio de Educación) por un periodo de 1 mes. Ambas comentan que este ha sido su primer contrato con una institución del estado desde que aprendieron esta habilidad.

Esta oportunidad con el MINED les facilito mayor experiencia, mayor desarrollo y mayor adquisición de habilidades. Los ingresos obtenidos fueron usados para la sobrevivencia de las familias de cada una.

In Nov 2012, a second opportunity is presented. This time it was their sewing machine repair skill that opened doors for them winning a bid with MINED

(Ministry of Education) to repair 150 sewing machines at six public schools in Managua in one month. Both commented this has been their first contract with a federal institution since their learned the skill.

This opportunity with MINED facilitated a major experience, a great personal development and continued learning of skills. The incomes earned were used for the support of each one of their families.

Toda esta oportunidad resulto de una simple referencia de una de las mujeres de un Centro de Aprendizaje al MINED quien conocía de la experiencia de ellas dos por medio del taller en la oficina de Managua. Mientras trabajaban en las maquinas, las alumnas de algunos de los colegios se mostraban contentas por el buen estado en que dejaban las maquinas e incluso empezaron a preguntar a Sandra y Guadalupe si podían llegar a sus casas a reparar sus propias maquinas.

This experience with MINED was the outcome of a simple reference made by one of the Learning Center women who knew Sandra and Guadalupe very well for their experience in the sewing machine repair workshop at the Managua Office. While they were working on the sewing machines at MINED, some of the students showed happiness for the neat work they were doing with the sewing machines and even started to ask them if they could come to their homes to repair their own machines, which they did later on. The excellent work and the quality of the service were obviously present in their work.



EL MINED por su parte se mostro completamente satisfecho con el servicio de calidad prestado e incluso dejaron entrever la posibilidad de darles una segunda oportunidad de empleo por la calidad de trabajo demostrado y el compromiso adquirido; todo está en dependencia de la disponibilidad de fondos del Ministerio de Educación.

MINED was completely happy with the quality of the service given and even commented on the possibility of a second employment opportunity because of the commitment demonstrated and quality of the service, the chance would all depend on the availability of funds from MINED.

Sandra y Guadalupe están muy felices y tienen suficiente confianza en si mismas como para trabajar en cualquier lado. Sandra and Guadalupe are very happy women and feel they fully believe they have the capability to work in any place.

Hoy en la actualidad las dos hacen trabajo a domicilio si es necesario y han atendido alrededor de 10 casas reparando 40 maquinas en total entre mecánicas, eléctricas y overlock??

Nowadays, they both attend requests from people's homes and have gone to about 10 houses to repair 40 machines such as pedal, electric and overlock sewing machines.

Estas experiencias han sido únicas y muy gratificantes para ellas y sus familias! Gracias WNP por la oportunidad de entrenarnos en esta habilidad de la cual hoy en día sobreviven sus familias.

These experiences have been unique and very rewarding for them and their families. Thanks WNP for giving us the opportunity to be trained on this skill from which we now make a living out of. (Translation & story by Mirna)

### Comments:

*"Since Sandra has developed the sewing machine repair skill, she is available to provide training to the different learning centers and her prestige has grown as a good sewing machine repair person. Her sewing skills as part of the Chica Nica project have made her proud of herself. To talk about Sandra is to talk about an empowered women, she takes her own decisions when is need of it for the well-being of her family." – Moises*

## Burn Therapy Dressing project

The 20<sup>th</sup> of April, 2013 the Burn Therapy Dressing project started to operate. Six patients have received assistance. Patients from Lenin Fonseca and Velez Paiz Public hospital are receiving this service of compression type dressings for their burns from W/NP. Dr. Leandro Perez and Boanerges Berroteran are the leaders of the project. Measurements are taken at Lenin Fonseca and Velez Paiz during the week for the patients that still are going to be at the hospital and need the dressings. For those patients that have been treated before the dressing project started, they will go to the W/NP office to be measured and acquire the proper dressing. Every Saturday Boanerge Berroteran with three volunteers from the Learning Centers will make the therapy dressings at the W/NP office.



Patients from far away cities as Rio Blanco and Chinandega are going to be benefit as they will receive a pair of every garment needed. Dr. Leandro suggested the pair because they will use a different one every day so they can wash them and get them ready for the next day. Serious case patients have visited the W/NP office and one patient will receive mask, arm, glove and vest garments. Dr. Leandro's commitment to make this program be a successful project is to follow the patients during the time they need to wear the dressings and combine this with a physiotherapy process. Also part of Dr. Leandro's collaboration for the program will be the assistance of Boanerges during the elaboration and fitting process to be sure of the right pressure every dressing is to have according to the patient's needs.

## Sandra & Guadalupe's work with the Burn Dressing project at the Managua Office on Saturday's in May 2013



*Guadalupe and Sandra are Chica Nica sewers. They know how to take measurements as regular sewers and it is the same process here, they measure every part of the body where the garment needs to be worn.*



### How did the Burn Therapy Dressing project start?

In looking how to provide a better assistance to the burn patients after they get the initial treatment and during their rehabilitations process, Dr. Leandro Perez (Lenin Fonseca Public Hospital) let W/NP know how important it is to provide therapy dressing to the patient's burns. Doctor Geraldine Cross (Velez Paiz Hospital) has expressed how sad it is to let patients go after they have received the initial treatment, and during their rehabilitation it is hard to accomplish the appropriate process without the therapy dressing. Patients need to go to other private institutions to get the therapy dressing, this takes a long time. Sometimes they get it at no charge and sometimes they need to pay for this service.

Taking the first step, Linda Schober (Waupaca, Wisconsin) found out they needed an Industrial serger sewing machine for this project, upon return to Wisconsin, she found one, and it was sent in the next shipment. For two years the initial idea of the project did not take place due to various obstacles. In 2013, funds were still not available to carry out this project as the machine needed to be rewired. \$150 was needed to fix the machine. About the same time, W/NP received a generous donation from the Andrew & Lyssa Schmidt Foundation to be used for a variety of projects and the industrial serger was finally able to be fixed. Upon the rewiring, the

computer did not respond to the clutch so Diddman and Moises in looking for a way to not to incur more expense, replaced the heavy 220 volt motor with a regular 120 volt motor (one that operates a simple sewing machine) and it worked out excellent. They will continue to explore in the future how to fix the original computer motor.



## A bit about Diddman, who is this mysterious repairman and where did he come from....



In 2006, Diddman's mother (also a Learning Center Coordinator) sent her son who was 11 years old at the time, to the first Sewing Machine Repair class at the Managua Office.

### Comments from the course evaluation from Diddman in December 2006:

*"I found this course very good, I wish they repeat it and they give me the opportunity to invite me again for that is very important for me. I learned a lot, like how to regulate the seam, to clean the machine, to tighten the thread, since I had never done this training before I learned a lot. I would like to learn and to work as technician in repair of Sewing machines. If I could be able to repair machines, I want to be an expert which will help me in life. I'd like to be a good technician in repairing machines, and I would like to repair Industrial. I would like if they gave me the opportunity to continue studying here."*

Ever since, Diddman has continued to be valuable, devoted volunteer. He has a creative spirit and desire to know how things work so spending time at the W/NP office with the sewing machines and bicycle repair project is the perfect opportunity and match for him. Volunteering his time before going to school is a great help to Moises and a significant sign of sincere dedication. Diddman commented, "Every day I am learning something new....even how to watch better so my cell phone does not get stolen on the bus again..." Each experience, good or bad, provides opportunities to approach (or fix) things in a different way. Diddman also is a part of the Burn Therapy Dressing Project and comes every Saturday to trouble shoot any mechanical problems the machines may be having. **Note:** It is interesting in his course evaluation in 2006 he comments that he would like to repair Industrial machines, and in 2013, he saves the day for W/NP by changing the motor on the Industrial Serger for the Burn Therapy Dressing Project.



Wheelchair restored by Diddman with bicycle tires.



“I would like to express to Linda Schober and the Schmidt Foundation our gratitude, it has been a great support for the Burn Therapy Dressing project and we would like to invite them and others to share their sewing (or other experience) with this program.”  
- Moises



Thank you also a lot to all the Nicaraguan volunteers that are part of the Burn Therapy Dressing program:

Doctor Leandro Perez

Boanerges Berroteran

Guadalupe Nunez

Sandra Boniche

Fatima Hernandez

Diddman Jarquin as sewing machine technical support



OK, so what started out as a short story about Sandra and Guadalupe expanded a bit, but that's their story – two amazing ladies!

