



Empowering Nicaraguans through Education and Training

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Member Firm: Alvarado y Asociados
Client: Centro Cultural Batahola Norte
Service: Ongoing Pro Bono Support Since 2008

In Nicaragua, a nation that struggles with unemployment and education, social enterprises like the Cultural Center of Batahola Norte (The Center) offer individuals a rare opportunity for growth and achievement. Since 2008, Alvarado y Asociados, Lex Mundi member firm for Nicaragua, has provided extensive pro bono support to The Center, assisting its mission to empower participants through basic education courses, artistic instruction, and vocational training.

The Center serves as a gathering place for education, arts, community events, celebrations and open religious ceremony. What started as an idea by Sr. Margarita Navarro, CSJ, and Fr. Angel Torrellas, OP, to help residents find fulfillment and dignity has transformed into a model community organization that serves hundreds of families per year. Fr. Angel's original music and catechism classes have grown into an arts program in which 300 young people are discovering new and creative ways to express themselves through music, painting, dance and theater. Sr. Margie's first sewing class, intended to empower women, has evolved into numerous vocational programs educating over 240 women helping them to improve economic conditions in their families.

Today, The Center is primarily engaged in three major program areas: promoting the right to education for women, youth and children; promoting children's right to participate in the artistic and cultural life of their community; and defending the right of women to live free of violence. The Center enrolls over 500 students per week in its educational programs.

Recently, The Center has begun a new initiative to prepare 40 young people and 28 adult women to enter the formal workforce. Additionally, The Center is assisting 80 young students with access to formal education through a combination of financial support and academic resources. The Center's Network of Youth



Violence-Prevention Promoters is leading an initiative to educate their peers about dangers signs of violence in dating relationships. Last fall this program reached over 100 youth in Batahola Norte and this year the young people continue to reach out to new groups.

Alvarado y Asociados has performed comprehensive pro bono work for The Center since being introduced by the Foundation in 2008. The firm has helped The Center register as a nonprofit association in Nicaragua, resolve various labor related matters and create internal labor policies. Firm staff, according to Jennifer Marshall, the Center's Coordinator "have been very professional, easy to work with and responsive to our needs. Working with them has given us confidence to make key decisions as an employer and as a nonprofit organization working to benefit our community."

Alvarado y Asociados's work to support The Center is having a great impact on the community and on countless lives, including Jacqueline Medina, a participant in self-esteem and leadership for women program:

The first time I was invited to a workshop, I thought, what am I doing here? These workshops are for people who are victims of violence. But as time went by I realized that even though I wasn't a victim of physical violence, I had very low self-esteem and self-worth. My world used to be the four corners of my house. I never had time for myself. The Center has taught me that I am important, that I have rights, and that I need to make space for myself. Now I delegate responsibilities to my husband and children and I find that our relationships have actually improved. Today I am even studying English, something I wanted to do all my life but I never had the time or money. Thanks to the Center I'm making this dream a reality.

Our Brochure



Video: About Our Work



