

International House NY

Carlos Junco

Reconciliation through the Culture and Photography in Nicaragua

Nicaragua

Description of the Project:

To create an alternative photography's guide of some places of Nicaragua in order to get closer the opposite sides of the society and showing how culture, people, work, architecture and landscapes are in this country. The guide will be focus on five topics: (i) work in Nicaragua; (ii) young's life; (iii) portraits and the story behind; (iv) creativity and (v) city and rural zone contrasts. Each photography will be along with a text explaining the meaning of the photograph. The photographs will be taken by young and students of the UCA (Universidad Centroamericana de Nicaragua). The project will include a short-time course of photography and an exhibition in the the IHNCA (Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamerica) in Managua. Other exhibition will be held in Granada (Nicaragua) at the Community House of the NGO Kasak. The guides will be sold (donated in the poorest community) and the funds obtained will be granted to the NGO Kasak. The NGO Kasak (www.ongkasak.com) is based in Madrid (Spain) and Granada (Nicaragua) with more than ten years working in solidarity projects and with permanent staff in Nicaragua. I am a member of the organization and one of the founders of the NGO in 2006. I have spent six summers (2003, 2005, 2007, 2011, 2014 and 2016) in Nicaragua working in projects financed by the NGO Kasak.

The Project is divided into phases as follows:

First: Contacting students of photography and communication interested in participating in the project. This phase will be done with the help of the staff of Kasak and with the help of the IHNCA and its Director Claudia Gordillo and Carlos Herrera. Claudia is a famous photographer in Nicaragua with more than 30 years of experience who teach photography at the UCA.

Second: Short course of photography reviewing the photography's techniques, ethic with people and behavior with cameras. The course will be held at IHNCA or in the NGO Kasak House by Carlos Herrera. Carlos Herrera has experience teaching photography. He has worked as a photographer for La Prensa (Nicaraguan Journal), Confidencial (Nicaraguan Magazine) and El Pais (Spanish Journal). There will be a brainstorm session in the course by encouraging students to share their ideas and initiatives for the elaboration of the guides. Attached is the resume of Carlos Herrera.

Third: Photography's phase. Students will be divided into groups and each group will work during one week taking pictures in the topic assigned. During this phase we will carry out sessions with the students for the preparation and evaluation of the photography's work. The project will provide meals, transport and hosting (if necessary) for the students. Students will mostly work in the areas where the NGO Kasak usually works supporting the communities: Granada, Managua, El Porvenir, Tepalón, Aguas Agrias, Santa Ana, etc.

Four: Selection of photographs for the guide and organization of the exhibition. The selection of the best photographs for the guide and the exhibition will be made by Susan Meiselas (susanmeiselas@gmail.com) and Claudia Gordillo (lunacornatani@gmail.com). Susan is professor of Photography in New York and member of the Magnum Agency. She has published photographs of Nicaragua in The Times and Paris Match. One of her photographs of Nicaragua was considered among the most influential Images of all the times by Time Magazine. Susan has helped in the preparation of the Project contacting photographers and Institutions of Nicaragua.

Five: Edition of the guide and organization of the exhibition at the IHNCA in Managua and at the "Casa Comunal of San Alejandro" in Granada.

Six: Students participating in the Project will share their experience with the children at the school of their communities. They will teach them some basic technique of photography and they will share with them the values developed participating in the Project and commitment with society.

This is one of the most important phases and we will insist on the student in doing their best for this phase.

Seven: Other exhibitions will be organized in Madrid and New York explaining and informing about the goals achieved with the project and current situation of Nicaragua. The guides will be sold in the exhibitions. In the guides we will mention (if authorized) the collaboration of the Davis Project for Peace and the International House including their logos. Funds obtained from the sale of the guides, will be used to finance a new guide with new themes spreading like that the word of Davis Project for Peace. The name of the authors will be included in each photograph of the guide and the exhibitions in order to develop and promote the professional career of the students.

The Project will supply the cameras (eight cameras) to be used by the students. Cameras will be used by students in the speaking at the school and then will be donated to the IHNCA and to the NGO Kasak. The cameras under the custody of Kasak and IHNCA will be used by the staff and students for future projects relating to photography. To be discussed if we give a prize (some cameras) for the best photographs. The Project will finance the expenses of the students (travel, food, dormitory, etc.).

Results and goals this Project hope to achieve:

From spring of 2018 there is a political crisis in Nicaragua. This crisis is affecting the fundamental rights of the people. During the demonstrations against the regime in spring of 2018 more than 400 people were killed and many people was put in jail just for exercising their fundamental rights. Most of these victims are students. The pacific protests initiated on spring by the citizens were leaded by the students. The classes were suspended last course and the students have lost one whole year of studies. Students have been the group most affected by this crisis.

This project will help them to believe again in the future and in the opportunities of a better life. Currently there exist a fracture between the people living in the cities (where the students are) and the people of the rural zone who mostly support the current regime. The idea of the project is to bring the students to rural zones in order to see how the people work there and how they live. This idea will get closer people from opposite sides using photography as a tool of reconciliation. The rural zones where the students will work are safe as they are the zones where the NGO Kasak usually works and we know the families and people of these communities. The Project will promote an economic opportunity and entrepreneurship for the students which have been seriously hit by the current conflict of Nicaragua. Participating in this project, students and people receiving students in de rural zones will develop their leadership skills in a conflict area promoting the art and culture. They will have also the opportunity to share this experience and the knowledge obtained in the Project with their classmates and the children of their communities. Like that, children in the school will be also beneficiaries of the project.

Indicators of success:

The number of students of photography and communication participating in the project (we estimate between 20 and 30 students) will indicate the success of the Project. The number of children at the school (we estimate more than 300) that will learn about the project with the experience told and taught by the students who participated in the Project. The people attending the exhibitions in Managua and Granada (more than 300) and the people enjoying the guides in Nicaragua, Spain and the US (more than 500). The funds obtained from donations in the exhibitions and from the sale of the guides will be used for promoting new guides. That means that the project will continue over the years editing new guides and developing the career of the students. The guides will remain at the libraries, houses and schools and will be consulted by people as a source of information over the years.

In my particular case, this Project will improve my openness vision of the world by interacting with members of different cultures and will develop a strong commitment on public action. Carrying out the Project will help me to improve my problem solving competences.