

Dear xxx

It is a pleasure to greet you from Nicaragua. I am writing to you with my concerns about further economic sanctions that the US and UK are planning for Nicaragua through the [RENACER ACT](#). I am concerned because these sanctions will affect those in most need and will hamper not only our work at Compas de Nicaragua, but also affect the many social programs that are being offered by the government. [[Here is a list](#) of the many accomplishments of the current Nicaragua government]

When I was 14, I had an opportunity to volunteer with a woman's nonprofit organization in my neighborhood in order to work with youth. At the time, I was struggling to get through high school because there were user fees and monthly fees that we had to pay and my parents also struggled to afford the school supplies. So, I was excited at the opportunity to volunteer with this women's group because I knew what it was like to grow up in poverty and wanted to help youth in my community.

I remember that I couldn't afford to attend my 6th grade or 12 grade graduations. We had to carry our own chairs from home to the school because there were not enough seats. My mother had to sew our notebooks together and we had to take our books in a rice sack to school because we couldn't afford a book bag. I was in secondary school toward the beginning of the 16 years of neoliberal governments when there were few social programs to support the poor, and when you had to pay to go to the doctor and for access to health care and there were user fees for public education. I had dreams of going on to college, but my parents couldn't afford to do so and there were few scholarship opportunities.

When I began working with Compas in 2000, we still had neoliberal governments here in Nicaragua and there was widespread poverty and illiteracy. Most children from the most impoverished settlements of the La Primavera neighborhood where Women in Action live were not able to afford to go to school. There weren't any opportunities for loans or other support for small businesses. I am proud of all of the work we have done together to offer education opportunities to youth and adults, and in order to support microloans to women's small businesses.

Thankfully, we now have a government which has made healthcare and education free, including medicines and surgeries and the university. Graduations are free and there is even a stipend given to each student who graduates from high school. We now have sports and recreation, and technical schools for at risk youth. Which is why, in part, we don't have the problem with gangs like other Central American countries. We have support for small businesses, including not only financing and low interest loans, but technical assistance as well. While not perfect, we do have a national government which has lifted people out of poverty and which has offered many opportunities to its people.

As a woman working with a group of low-income women, I am particularly grateful for all of the advances in women's rights. Nicaragua ranks 5th overall in the world for gender equality and first out of 153 countries for educational attainment and health and survival. And for someone who works to help improve the lives of those most in need in my community, I realize that not even 100 Compas de Nicaragua's could make up for the loss of the social programs that are currently provided. That is why I feel the need to speak up for my people, for those most in need, and for all of us who benefit from this development model.

I understand if this positive news about the Nicaragua government comes to a surprise to you, since most international media report that in Nicaragua we have a dictator, that opposition presidential candidates are imprisoned, there is no free speech or fair elections and that there is widespread repression of political dissent. However, the reality here in Nicaragua is quite different. Here is a [list of articles](#) which tell a much different story about the current political situation in our country. In particular, I would recommend reading, '[What if it happened like this in the U.S.?](#)' by the Center for Development in Central America which compares what is happening in Nicaragua with something similar happening in the U.S.

At a time when everyone is worried about the impacts of climate change and pandemics, Nicaragua is providing a development model that not only is lifting people out of poverty, but also emphasizes a healthy society and environment. We are doing it through a free public health system based on preventative medicine, reforestation projects, renewable energy, and agro-ecology and regenerative farming practices among small farmers to produce organic and healthy foods. These are the things that people from the U.S. that I have talked to say they would like in their country. So I have to ask; why is the U.S. sanctioning us?

You may know that the US government has already passed the [Nica Act](#) which has already affected the economy. Now, the RENACER Act which will put further economic sanctions on our country. While some may believe that the sanctions are intended to pressure government leaders, the reality is that they actually affect the most impoverished people most.

The RENACER Act could send families back to poverty even as our government has reduced poverty. Most Nicaraguans support the Sandinista government as indicated in [recent polls by M & R Consultants](#). As a sovereign nation, we have the right as a people to make our own decisions. We hope that the US government will not pass the RENACER Act and will lift the Nica Act sanctions and allow our country to continue to develop.

As I look back on the 22 years that I have worked with Compas, I am proud of what we have accomplished together. I am also deeply thankful and grateful for your support over all of these years and hope you will continue to support us going forward. Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Ana Narvaez, Director