



NICARAGUA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN ACTION GROUP (NSCAG) Annual Report 2015



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Young members of public sector union UNE

Highlights

One of the main highlights of 2015 was the signing of the first ever hospital to hospital twinning agreement between Nicaragua and the UK. During a visit to Nicaragua in 2015, a framework twinning agreement was signed between the George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust in Nuneaton and the Nilda Patricia Hospital in Ciudad-Sandino, Managua. The agreement also included a twinning between UNISON West Midlands Region and the health trade union FETSALUD and affirmed mutual support between the two unions and hospitals. Both sides agreed to strengthen and develop foundations first formed in 2014 and committed to learn together, share expertise and work to improve the quality of care in health services for patients and staff. In April 2015, we were delighted to welcome Heysel Medina and Carlos Molina from FETSALUD to the UK as part of a UNISON-sponsored capacity building project aimed specifically at women and young people. In addition to participation in UNISON's National Health Conference in Liverpool, the guests attended an event held at the George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust, where the hospital's Acting Chief Executive Kath Kelly presided over a formal signing of the twinning agreement.

"The project and the twinning agreement is not just a symbolic gesture. It will hopefully recognise the support our teams and organisations can give to our Nicaraguan partners and provide us with an insight into the Nicaraguan health system, so that we can also look at any of their ideas which might work here" - Dawn Downes, UNISON Branch Secretary

UK Trade Union Solidarity

We have continued to receive outstanding support from trade unions in the UK, in particular for projects which have made an invaluable contribution towards strengthening Nicaragua's trade unions. During 2015, UNISON supported two projects through its International Development Fund. The first was a project, set up in partnership with UNISON's West Midlands Region, designed to train future leaders and to build the knowledge and skills of women and young members in FETSALUD. In December 2015, 113 young members graduated, following completion of one of the course modules on *Union Organising and Labour Rights*. A second project for the public sector union UNE saw the establishment of a trade union training school to provide capacity building for union leaders.

The self-employed workers' union CTCP also benefitted from a training programme funded by TUC Aid. The project began in May 2015 and aimed to promote women's leadership and participation in the union.

Another project, supported by the NUT and UIA Charitable Fund and run jointly with Computer Aid International, provided computers to the National Workers' Front FNT. This allowed the FNT to establish a computer laboratory through which trade union members have acquired the skills needed to improve their access to employment, increase their income and enhance their effectiveness as trade unionists.

In addition to project funding, UK unions have supported us in a number of different ways. We are very grateful to UNITE for regularly providing us with a free venue for our events and for donating generously to our appeals and to UNISON and the CWU for kindly sponsoring our raffles.

As in previous years, we were present at all of the major trade union conferences. In September, Flor Avellan, Deputy General Secretary of the Self Employed Workers' Union CTCP visited the UK. She spoke at a number of events, including UNISON's regional international seminar held in Newcastle, and also visited Wales at the invitation of Wales NSC and UNISON Wales Region. She also spoke at a meeting of UNISON's North West Region in Manchester and attended the TUC Congress held in Brighton.

Affiliations

Ten national unions were affiliated at the year-end: BECTU, BFAWU, CWU, FBU, GMB, NUT, RMT, UNISON, UNITE and USDAW and we were particularly pleased to welcome GMB as our newest affiliate. The number of affiliated branches and regions was 117, an increase of 52 over 2013. Four trades councils were also affiliated.

Affiliation breakdown by union:

	Dec 11	Dec 12	Dec 13	Dec 14	Dec 15
CWU	16	14	13	15	15
FBU	0	0	0	0	0
GMB	1	2	2	4	5
NUT	6	6	6	7	8
PCS	0	0	0	0	0
RMT	1	1	1	1	1
UNISON	20	21	24	28	30
UNITE	27	23	18	53	57
USDAW	1	1	1	1	1
TOTALS	72	68	65	109	117

Staff: Louise Richards

NSCAG Executive Members: Dave Auger , Dave Cosgrave, John Drewery, Rita Drobner, Bob Hardie, Ken Rustidge, Andy Waterworth

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to NSCAG's work, whether a trade union individual, branch, region or national office. We are also extremely grateful to the volunteers who have staffed our stalls at trade union conferences around the country and to those who have assisted us with translation work throughout the year. A full copy of the NSCAG accounts is available on request from the office.

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