

# SchoolBOX: Nicaragua Needs Our Help Now More than Ever

SchoolBOX has been committed to “making education possible” in Nicaragua for over ten years. What unites our staff, volunteers and supporters is the belief that education can defeat poverty. Since 2006, we have provided simple tools and infrastructure to children in over 100 communities throughout Nicaragua in order to remove the barriers to education in Central America’s poorest country.

Since April 2018, peaceful protests have erupted all over Nicaragua, and have been met by strong government opposition. As a result, our beloved country is experiencing the worst period of unrest and violence since the Contra Wars of the 1980s. International observers estimate that over 170 people have lost their lives in Nicaragua since the protests began.

Roadblocks have been set up throughout the country, limiting transportation, and acting as flashpoints for violence. SchoolBOX has made the difficult decision to temporarily suspend programming to protect the safety of our staff in the field. We have been forced to halt the construction of our 100<sup>th</sup> classroom and the delivery of much-needed educational packages to our partner communities for the time being. We are working to ensure that each member of the SchoolBOX team is not put in harm’s way, and is not risking their safety to come in to work.

Despite the current political crisis, we have seen meaningful improvements to the quality of education since we started working in Nicaragua. The grade 6 graduation rate has improved by 8 percentage points from 48% in 2007 to 56% today.

Each one of our dedicated staff could tell you a story of one child or teacher in a partner community who was empowered to beat the odds and get a basic education thanks to the new classroom, library, or educational package they received from SchoolBOX.

Our staff in Nicaragua is the backbone of our organization. They have dedicated their lives towards empowering children in their home country. Many members of the Canadian SchoolBOX community have personal stories and friendships with our staff members, and even consider them a part of their extended family.

We are humbly asking you to help support our team and sustain our operations during this tough time. Please consider making a personal donation, running an event with friends and family, or rallying your corporate contacts to support SchoolBOX’s General Operations fund.

Your generosity will help us maintain our commitment to supporting our partner communities with education, and provide a stipend to our Nicaraguan team until it is safe for them to return to the



SchoolBOX’s Nicaraguan Director Ronald Chavarria, Programs Manager Jazmin Lopez, and a student from the Josefa Toledo School that SchoolBOX constructed in 2017

field. We invite you to donate directly at [schoolbox.ca/Nicaragua](http://schoolbox.ca/Nicaragua).

## Fundraiser at Equator Café

You can also support SchoolBOX by coming out to a screening of the documentary film *Caffeinated* at the Equator Café in Almonte on Thursday, August 9 at 7PM. The film illuminates the global production chain of coffee, and the small-scale farmers, roasters and café owners that provide us with that

perfect cup — like Equator does for all of us in the Ottawa Valley! There will be a suggested donation of \$25 at the door.

While Nicaragua is suffering politically and economically, we know that education is needed more urgently now than ever. SchoolBOX remains committed to our mission to bring quality education to kids who are in desperate need of hope.

— Jon Tam,  
SchoolBOX Acting Executive Director

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