



Casa Congo

ASTILLERO, NICARAGUA

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

WELCOME TO CASA CONGO



Founded in 2017 in El Astillero, Tola, by a team of Italian and Nicaraguan social entrepreneurs with a mission to empower communities for sustainable development.

Casa Congo is a non-profit organization that aims to incubate local community enterprises to drive the socio-economic development and environmental regeneration of the region.

The name Casa Congo comes from the local howler monkey “Congo” that is the symbol of the Chacocente Wild Reserve.

Since its inception, Casa Congo has built and operated a sustainability hub that has provided education to over 250 local students and hosted more than 100 international volunteers.

OUR PROGRAMS

1. Construyendo Sueños

Bamboo Social Housing



2. Las Tejedoras

Recycled Plastic Art & Furniture



3. Las Flores

Agroecology & Water Security



4. Brigada Ecologica

Conservation & Ecotourism



1. CONSTRUYENDO SUEÑOS

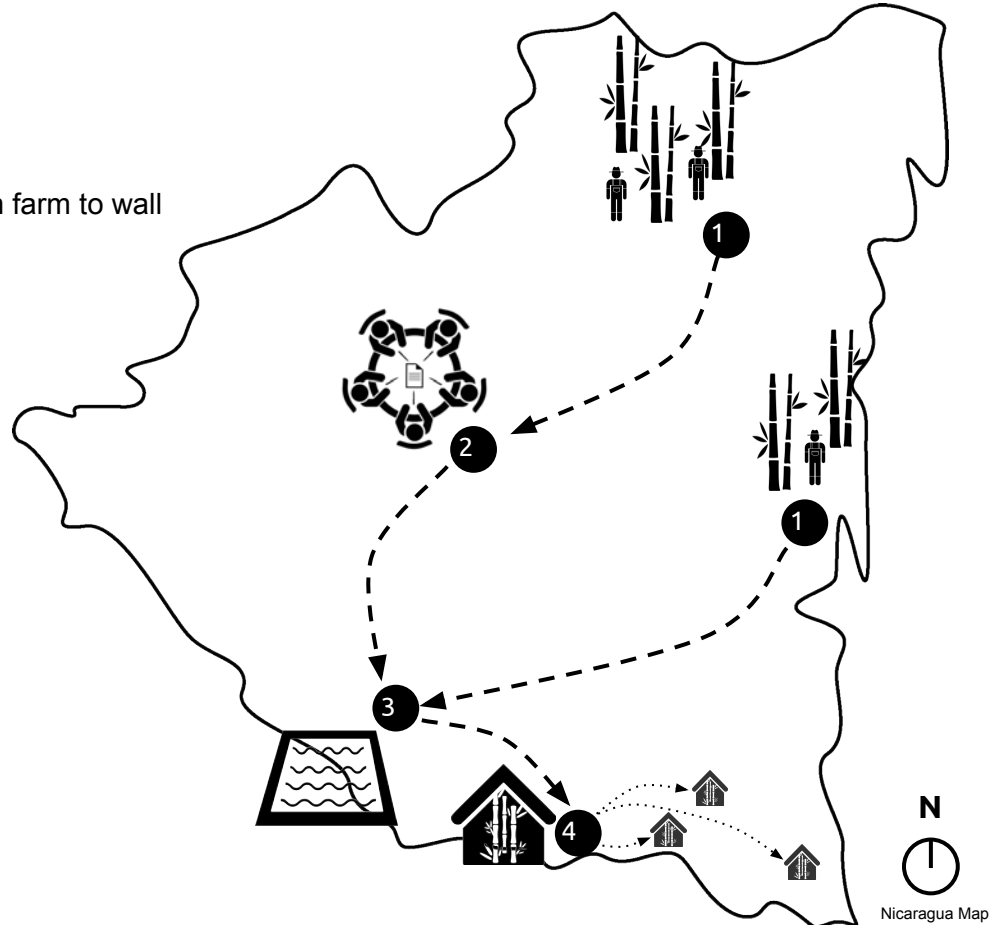
Nicaragua's first ever bamboo social housing program.

Achievements:

- Established a community run bamboo supply chain - from farm to wall
- Sequestered 40 tCO₂
- Improved forestry management of 6 hectares of bamboo
- Built 20 bamboo homes for families who live with \$3/day
- Installed 20 septic tanks and bathrooms
- Built 1 prefab bamboo workshop
- Provided 70 job opportunities for farmers & carpenters
- Trained over 100 community members

Key Plan:

- 1 Matagalpa + Chontales**
Bambù farms
- 2 Managua**
ANF / INVUR project management & policy office
- 3 Salinas**
Community managed bambù treatment centre
- 4 El Astillero**
Casa Congo school & bambù prefab workshop





CLICK HERE TO SEE THE ASSEMBLY PROCESS OF A BAMBOO HOUSE



**1. HARVEST BAMBOO FROM FOREST
IN CHONTALES**



**2. CUT BAMBOO AND MOVE TO
STACKING STATIONS**



**3. TRANSPORT FROM FARM TO
TREATMENT CENTRE**



**4. CURE BAMBOO IN NATURAL
SALT POOLS**



**5. STORE AND PREFAB PANELS IN
WORKSHOP IN EL ASTILLERO**



**6. SHIP PREFAB PANELS TO SITES
AROUND THE TOLA AREA**



**7. ASSEMBLE PANELS IN
STRUCTURAL FRAMES**



**8. RENDER THE WALLS AND ADD
ROOFING / FINISHES**

2. LAS TEJEDORAS

2007

To protect the local turtles, a collective of 17 women in Nicaragua starts collecting plastic bags and transforming them into new textile products - such as beach bags or key chains.

Since then they are known as Las Tejedoras - The Weavers.

2021

Together with Casa Congo, Las Tejedoras launch a rug design made out of 1600 plastic bags and are finalists in RO Guiltless Plastic during Milan Design Week.

2022

Casa Congo collaborates with the global design firm Unispace to create a new edition of rugs, designed by different architects from their London, Amsterdam, Paris, Milan and Zurich studios. The rugs have been purchased by corporations to install in their offices as a symbol of their commitment to sustainable development.

So far, the new collection has removed another 22,000 plastic bags from the environment and provided income to 17 families.

2023

Another 30 tapestries have been commissioned to Las Tejedoras who are currently in the process of collecting plastic bags to produce the custom products.



UNA BOLSA MENOS, UNA TORTUGA MÁS!

Collect discarded plastic bags



Every day Las Tejedoras and Casa Congo students collect plastic bags from the beach, the jungle, outside shops and in the streets.

Washing and drying



Once sorted by colour and type, all the bags are carefully washed and sun-dried, to eliminate dirt and saline residues.

Stripping



Once completely dried, the bags are cut into thin strips using scissors.

Making threads



Strips are later intertwined into a 2mm thick strong flexible yarn.

Knitting



The resulting 100% recycled plastic yarn is then knitted together by the expert hands of Las Tejedoras to become a functional and colorful object for everyday use.

HIGHLIGHTS OF LAS TEJEDORAS SUSTAINABLE CRAFT



Liked by nk_asika and others
internimagazine #InterniDesign
🇮🇹 Nasce dalla raccolta di 1500 sacchetti di plastica trovati sulle spiagge del Nicaragua il tappeto tessuto a mano dalle donne del collettivo Las Tejedoras che grazie alla collaborazione con @casacongoconservation è stato presentato surante



3. LAS FLORES

Las Flores de Nicaragua is a El Astillero based collective of 10 women who design and manage Casa Congo's agroecology and water security program:

- 15'000 trees planted in Chacocente in collaboration with Brigada Ecologica and volunteers
- 25 agro ecological gardens in El Astillero
- 1 plant nursery + seed bank built
- 390 clean water filters delivered
- 50 rainwater capture tanks installed
- 36 wells restored
- 3 workshops with international experts
- Piloting syntropic agriculture techniques in the Centre of Agroecology

"People used to laugh at us and tell us we were crazy, now they call Casa Congo the jungle and come asking me for advice and help in their gardens"
Anielka Aguirre



AGROECOLOGY & COMMUNITY



4. LA BRIGADA ECOLOGICA



Our conservation efforts in the Chacocente Wild Refuge and ecotours are managed by a team of local students and environmental stewards who participate in Casa Congo's educational programs and gain employment opportunities in the ecotourism sector.

So far, over 100 children have actively taken part in our activities with a key interest in turtle conservation, beach cleanups, surf and nature walks. When international researchers or students come to Nicaragua, the Brigada becomes their support team.

Our best students are awarded scholarships to undertake a degree in ecotourism and environmental sciences at the University of Rivas. Following their degree, they're given employment opportunities as forest rangers, tour guides and other educational or volunteering related activities in the El Astillero area.

YOUTH ADVOCACY IN ACTION



PRIORITIZING COMMUNITY NEEDS AT ALL TIMES!



WHAT'S NEXT FOR CASA CONGO?

Boosting our volunteering programs in Nicaragua
Impact Retreats, El Astillero

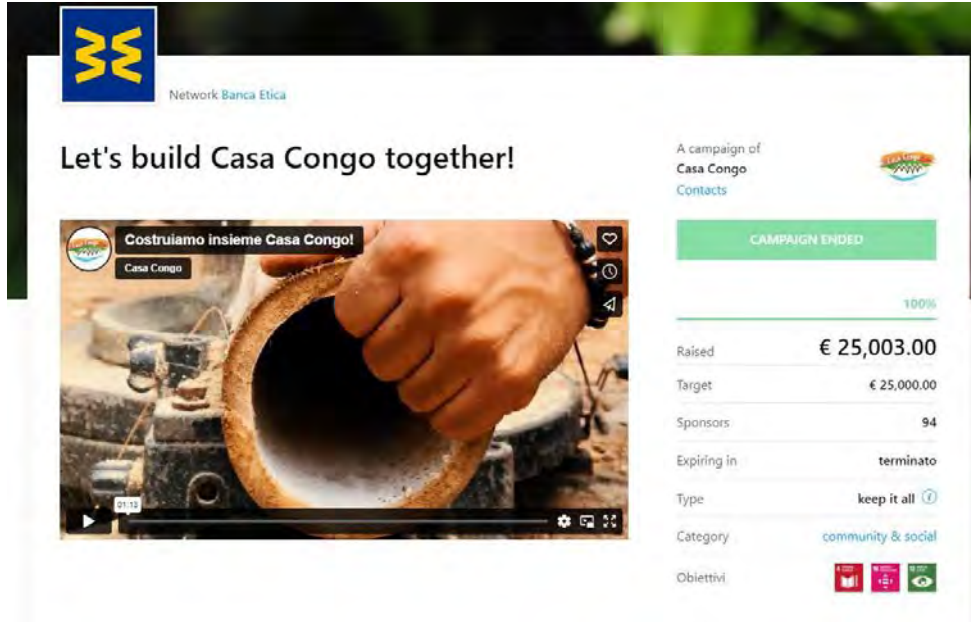


Launching a new bamboo school in Mexico
La Morada de los Ancestros, Palenque



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Donate to our programs!



The screenshot shows a crowdfunding campaign for Casa Congo. At the top left is the Network Banca Etica logo. The main heading reads "Let's build Casa Congo together!". Below this is a video player showing a person's hands working on a large, curved, earthenware object. To the right of the video, the campaign details are listed:

- A campaign of Casa Congo
- Contacts
- CAMPAIGN ENDED
- 100%
- Raised: € 25,003.00
- Target: € 25,000.00
- Sponsors: 94
- Expiring in: terminato
- Type: keep it all
- Category: community & social
- Obiettivi: (three icons representing social impact goals)

Come volunteer with us!



Casa Congo welcomes ad-hoc collaborations & corporate partnerships with brands looking to make an impact.

VOLUNTEERING HIGHLIGHTS



Over 100 volunteers have come to Casa Congo since 2017. After some quiet years due to covid, Casa Congo is excited to fully reopen its doors in 2023!

Volunteering at Casa Congo is an opportunity to live a unique learning experience, enjoy nature and make an impact with the local community.

Volunteers can either join our regular sustainable development activities or contribute with a specific research project. Past collaborations include internships with universities such as Politecnico di Milano or theses with scientific institutions like Nat Geo.

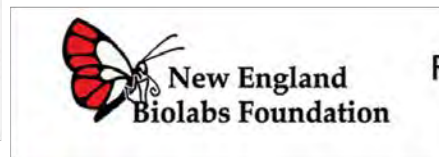
"As the end of the year is approaching, I want to share my favorite achievement of 2021. Working at and with Casa Congo has been a great and inspiring experience that allowed me to grow from both a personal and professional level"

- Mattia Bosoni, Urban Environmental Management @ Wageningen University

MEET THE ALLIES WHO HELP US CHANGE LIVES



wework



Fondazione
Ermotti

Ro
Rossana Orlandi

PLASTIC PRIZE 2021



MARENA
Ministerio del Ambiente
y los Recursos Naturales



HELP US MAKE A CHANGE!



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