



SOWING SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE OF EL ASTILLERO

2021 AGROECOLOGY PROGRAM REPORT

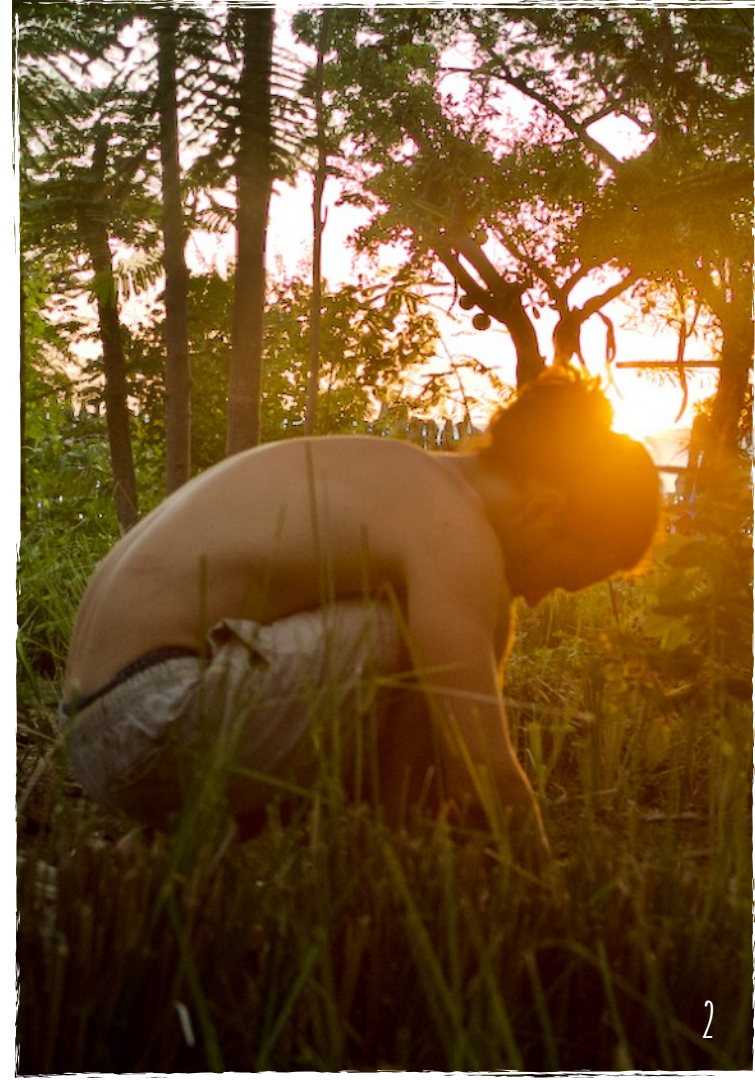
A NOTE FROM LUCAS SEBASTIÁN

The seeds we have planted together are starting to bear fruit and grow roots. Gardens have slowly been growing all around town and Las Flores can be seen working all together alongside the community. We are extremely grateful for all who have participated in our workshops and community mapping projects.

We have big plans to keep gathering support and improve the centre of agroecology at Casa Congo. Most importantly we want to continue our work to build your vision for the territory and El Astillero's resilience to floods, hurricanes, and produce more healthy food for the community. This annual report showcases the work that the agroecology program has done in 2021. We have done this together!



Lucas Sebastián
Director of Agroecology



A NOTE FROM MANUEL AND ANIELKA

As Casa Congo, we dream of a community that produces quality food for their own consumption which can also generate an income from their own gardens to have a healthier life. Thank you for accepting this vision, we hope many will begin to dream the same dream.

Manuel Cortez.

Our Agroecology program hopes to improve our food system for our families and our community in order to strengthen our food sovereignty. Thank you to everyone who has believed in our work, has helped us and continues to support our program.

Anielka Aguirre.



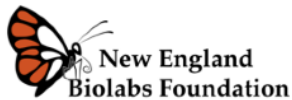
THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

This year we really have our partners to thank! Casa Congo is supported by an incredible group of organisations that care about El Astillero.

Their belief in this program, is also belief in community driven regeneration and landscape restoration. It is certainly not always easy, and it is not always done right, however without you none of this would be possible. You are all part of the Casa Congo Family!



FONDAZIONE
ERMOTTI



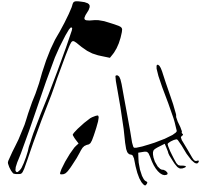
FONDAZIONE
MARGHERITA
LUGANO



WAGENINGEN
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



OUR IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



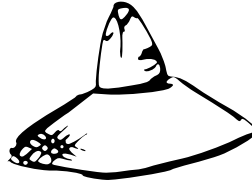
12

Workshops & Excursions



72

Seed Varieties



81

Program Participants



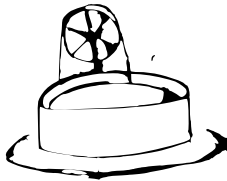
11

Interns & Researchers



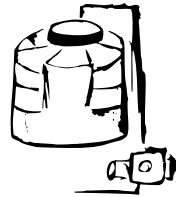
390

Water filters



30

Restored Wells



6

Water Tanks & Pumps



12

Community Gardens



THE CENTRE OF AGROECOLOGY

This year we built an incredible Centre of Agroecology that has become the beating heart of our program's work. Now we are ready to propagate many trees and save seeds so that the community of El Astillero can have access to the resources they need to grow food and plant trees.

A huge thank you to the the University of British Columbia which donated the funds necessary to complete the project and to Victor Huston (@hustonramos) for painting an incredibly inspiring mural!



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



COMMUNITY MAPPING & LANDSCAPE VISION

We are working on an ecosystem report, which includes results from three years of research projects. The Ecosystem report is an analysis of the current state of El Astillero and the surrounding landscape. We look forward to including more community members in the mapping and consultation process to create a long term vision that looks to achieve 5 major goals.

- **Food sovereignty***
- **Flood prevention**
- **Reduce Pollution**
- **Reforestation to protect biodiversity**
- **Cultural preservation**

* Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecological and sustainable methods, as well as the right to define their own food and agriculture systems.



AGROECOLOGY & ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

The Agroecology & Ecological Restoration branch provides workshops on agroecological practices, paid apprenticeships, access to tools, access to plant / seeds nurseries and supports community-driven research.

This year the focus of our work has been having educational workshops and excursions so that Las Flores and other community members can engage in the diversity of Agroecology practices in Nicaragua and learn new skills. We hosted a workshop on indigenous garden beds and a workshop on organic insecticide production with the Ministerio de Economía Familiar Comunitaria Cooperativa y Asociativa. We collaborated with the local blacksmith to make even more tools for children to use in the garden. And some important highlights included excursions to: Finca Oasis, Finca Mirador, Quinta San Patricio, Finca de Mel, Finca los Gemelos, Chontales, and Finca Corazon which could be the start of an incredible collaboration!

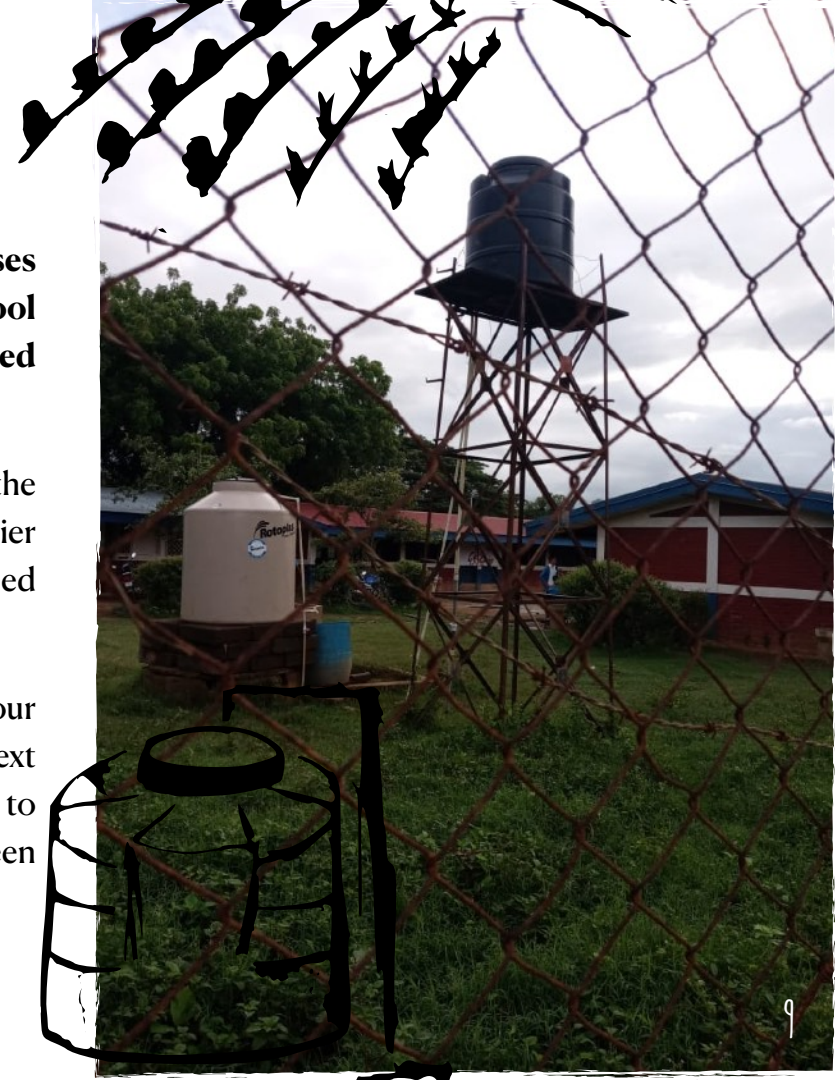


COMMUNITY GARDENS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Community Gardens and Infrastructure branch organises mutual aid working groups to support the restoration of the school grounds, the creation of family gardens and the community seed bank.

This year we focused on the school. Buying some fencing to close off the school from cows and pigs so that we can reforest and provide a healthier place for children to learn, study and play. The next step is co-designed the school gardens.

We also provided Maribel with a fence after she completed our apprenticeship program and she has started a wonderful garden. Next year, once the KUNA houses are finished there is a lot of potential for us to spend more time in more gardens and continue to improve the green infrastructure of El Astillero.

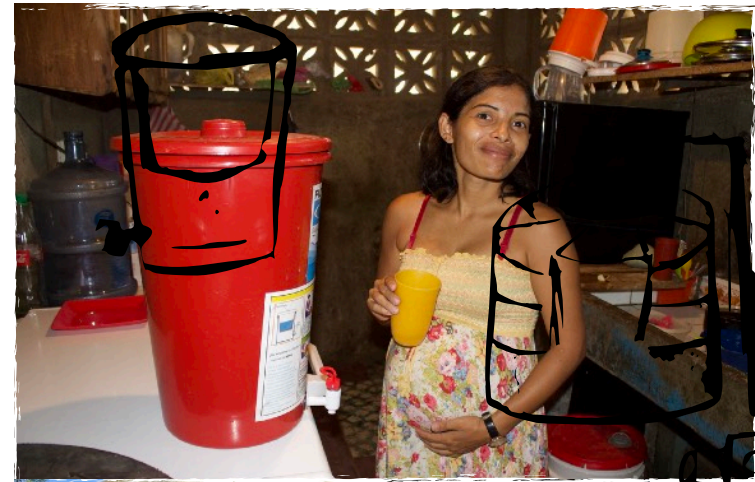


WATER CAPTURE AND FILTRATION

The Water Capture and Filtration branch provides grey water filters, green infrastructure, workshops about rainwater management, and financing to purchase water tanks and pumps to provide clean water and reduce pollution.

Over six months we distributed 390 water filters to families in need to filter drinking water and we for five weeks six workers cleaned and restored wells, installing manual pumps to facilitate their safe use. Our water subsidy program also facilitated the purchase of 6 water tanks and pumps, and demand is surpassing supply. We continue to analyse the water quality of the wells in town, measuring for coliform, nitrates and phosphates.

Most importantly, after almost six weeks without water in the entirety of El Astillero, Casa Congo facilitated the repairs of the village infrastructure to ensure the return of access to water for the 3,500 residents that call El Astillero home.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS

The Community Outreach branch seeks to grow awareness of agroecology, food sovereignty and ecological restoration as well as put power in the hands of our program participants to weave their own stories into our work.

We've been laying the foundation for more work in the years to come. The creation of our "Garden Playbook" is an incredible step for us to share our knowledge and practices. The development of a school curriculum is well underway and we are excited to open our educational facilities once again next year. Our participatory budgeting has seen investments on education, medicine, menstrual health, and jewellery workshops.

We have restarted our mural projects with a beautiful mural on the centre of agroecology and we supported two incredible earth day and day of the environment festivals in collaboration with the school.



TECHNICAL TRAININGS & ALLIANCE BUILDING

The Technical Trainings and Alliance Building branches invites experts to come to El Astillero to support the co-creation of an agroecology unique to El Astillero. It also strives to build alliances along the Mesoamerican biological corridor to strengthen the fight against climate change and decolonise development.

Due to Corona Virus our technical trainings have had to be cancelled on more than one occasion, which is extremely unfortunate. Yet this has given us the chance to build on our alliances and plan for the future. We have been very fortunate to be visited by Rainforest Alliance and to have participated in Groundswell International's "Conferencia Regional Latino América y el Caribe." We are also extremely Grateful for Arable Labs support in giving us an arable mark to facilitate valuable data collection.



LOOKING FORWARD

In 2022 we are really looking forward to deepening our consultation process, finalising our ecosystem report and beginning to lay out a landscape vision that can drive Casa Congo's work for the years to come.

The Centre of Agroecology will continue to be a space where you are all welcome and we hope to be processing the products of our garden much more than we have in the past. Come collect our trees and plants!

We are also looking to engage with farmers on a deeper level, perhaps guaranteeing a good price for organic produce and distributing those products to people in El Astillero.

Next year please join Las Flores and think about enrolling your children in our educational programs when they start once again!

Thank you so much!





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