

The NEST Trust Newsletter
(Nicaragua English and Sustainable Tourism)
Issue 4 Autumn 2008



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Headline news

- **CD tracks of the NEST materials downloadable from the website.**
- **Maggie Jo presents materials at ANPI conference in Managua and NEST materials start to 'fly'**
- **Potential volunteers will contact communities directly.**
- **Thirty one successful students in Deylin's solar powered computer class**

The teaching materials

Great excitement as we approach our goal of having all Book one materials on the internet. **Many thanks to Richard Cauldwell who has uploaded the recordings.** On <http://www.thenesttrust.org.uk/materials.html> there will be a form to complete and submit. This will give the link to the materials.

Book one

We did a reprint of 1000 copies in September. It felt good to have the demand and it's reduced the cost / copy: It's now just \$2.50 + transport (or free from the net!) They are stored in Esteli with Jane (Juanita) Boyd our distributor.
cafeluzyluna@yahoo.com
Tel (505) 441 8466 or 405 8919
Café Luz, del Meson una cuadra al este, Esteli

We have provided all the secondary schools on Ometepe Island with a class set of books. We sold 100 + during September and hope others will be distributed in the coming months.

Book two

This will be ready for the design process in early 2009. Chris Johnson has completed two of the three modules. We are wondering about desk top publishing it but have no experience in this. The demand will be smaller than for Book one, so the initial print cost is probably not viable. However, it would be if tourism institutions and students in Costa Rica felt it was suitable for their classes, so we are seeking their views.

The ANPI conference

ANPI is the association for Nicaraguan teachers of English who meet annually for a 2-day conference, NICATESOL. Maggie Jo was invited to participate and talk to teachers about the materials and syllabus. The Ministry of Education is revising the secondary school syllabus and introducing a more communicative approach and The NEST materials can support this process. They are currently the only materials which are set in the Nicaraguan context and have recordings to help with pronunciation and listening comprehension.

Maggie Jo had promised herself she'd never again stand on a conference platform, powerpoint at the ready, staring down at a sea of people, 450 from the number of handouts issued. Why oh why! But it was a fantastic opportunity to disseminate the materials and the teachers were enthusiastic, buying copies. The conference visit also led to two teacher training workshops, one on Ometepe and the other in Esteli.

NICATESOL 2008 was a very impressive two day event: 700 participants on the UCA campus; refreshments morning and afternoon plus hot lunch for all; two plenary sessions; dozens of parallel sessions, each with a steward to prevent overcrowding and timekeep; a final standing-room-only ceremony with laughter and action. **It's not just the buses that can run to time in Nicaragua.** Everything ran to time, without queues and with great participation, thanks to a great organisational team and huge squad of volunteers. Maggie Jo's visit was sponsored by The British Embassy (international travel) and ANPI (local accommodation).

Volunteers

A major change in activities is that we have stopped linking volunteers with communities. There are several reasons for this: it has been very time consuming and Maggie Jo is ready to channel her time and energy in other directions; the supply of volunteers has diminished; also several of the communities were not ready for classes and volunteers: their leaders may have recognised the future need for English but the young people themselves could not see that far ahead and classes were poorly attended; in addition, the goal of the project has always been sustainability and that means gradually withdrawing while providing indirect support.

The website contains information for potential volunteers on what's involved and how to contact communities directly.

There are though **two volunteers in place at the moment until March 2009:**

Andie Reynolds is with UCA Tierra y Agua near Granada.

Wendy Wedgebury is with UCA San Ramon near Matagalpa. (Wendy was in El Coyolito Mirafior 2 years ago.)

Community teachers

- Deylin continues to teach English to a small group in Cebollal
- Marlon teaches a few people in Esteli.

Sadly the classes in Yali have ceased for the moment. It wasn't viable for Mirafior residents to travel there and teach: it's a 20 – 30 minute walk for them, then over an hour on the bus. While Rebecca Tully was in Yali some classes continued to run but, since she left, the Cooperative we were working through has decided that it does not have the capacity to include educational work in its brief – it is relatively new. This is a great shame since education is so important for the future of the country and the individuals.

Self study groups in El Regadillo

The self study English groups in El Regadillo near Esteli went well between April and October. Rebecca Tully went over once a fortnight to work with students and then for a six week period Beth Harker went twice a week

If a long term volunteer with English teaching and computer skills went there, we would definitely provide a few computers and try to fast-track a small group who could then be the community teachers. The funds are sitting waiting!

Scholarships The seven young women who we are supporting are doing well. Nerys Josefina will graduate this year but had to take an expensive final course and we were happy to be able to part fund that for her; she has been one of our best scholars. However, from 2009 we shall encourage scholars to take up places at universities that do not charge large fees for a final course; several seem to use this as a fund raising occasion, charging \$200 a year and then \$800 for the final thesis course. Outrageous!

We had the funds for Nerys thanks to friends who make a monthly donation. Just £10 a month provides a young woman with a scholarship. They so need that opportunity. An alternative Christmas present for friends or family?

Computer classes

Deylin's computer classes continue to be a success story. Thirty one students will graduate in December from the one year introductory course in the little solar powered computer lab in El Cebollal. The batteries continue to work well; there has been no interruption to power this year. We replaced one of the monitors in October.

Rebecca gave computer classes in Yali a good start and a young man from the town took over for a few months when she left.

Unfortunately, they were organised by the same Cooperative as the English ones and so also ceased in October. However, there is a women's group who are keen to organise classes and we hope to work with them.

Fundraising

We were very grateful for a grant to help finance the community-led English and computer classes. Our thanks also to the British Embassy who sponsored Maggie Jo's international travel for the ANPI conference.

