



SUPPORT NICARAGUAN PEASANT WOMEN WHO ARE EMPOWERING THEMSELVES AND SUSTAINING THE

FEM!

Estelí, NICARAGUA
FOUNDED 1995

In 1995 ten peasant women in Estelí, northern Nicaragua, decided that they were tired of being invisible and having no control over their lives, relegated to the kitchen to cook and take care of children while their husbands worked the land and controlled the finances.

So they banded together to procure land that they could be in charge of, and formed an organization called “la Fundación Entre Mujeres”—the Among Women Foundation—or FEM.

Over the past 24 years the FEM has grown to include 2,500 members in 17 communities and eight agricultural cooperatives throughout Estelí. From the outset, the FEM included in its core mission the goals of promoting the education and health of women and girls, and fighting domestic violence.

Read on to learn how you can support the women of the FEM as they expand their health-preserving practices, and honor their motto:

SOVEREIGNTY OVER OUR BODIES, OUR RIGHTS ...AND OUR SEEDS!

HERE’S HOW YOU CAN HELP: The FEM is currently expanding its Mobile Clinic which provides Pap and STD testing for women in distant rural communities. The plan is to acquire funds for the vital treatments needed for women with abnormal results, such as cancer. Just \$7,500 could provide the usual five rounds of follow-up care for the 30 women who currently need to travel to the city for treatment, including medications, special procedures, and often surgery. **Please consider donating** to ensure these brave women get the treatment they need. Checks **earmarked for the FEM** can be sent to: Friendship Office, PO Box 926, Greenbelt, MD 20768, or donate online at:

<https://friendshipamericas.org/donate>



Background:

These *campesinas* realized there were two factors inhibiting their ability to take charge of their lives: they didn't know how to read or write, and many of them were experiencing violence in their own homes. So, the FEM included in its core mission the goals of fighting domestic violence and promoting the education and health of women and girls. These goals complement the organization's work in agroecology—that is, working the land in a way that yields healthy food for families and that sustains the land.

The FEM is open to women of all political stripes, creeds, and sexual orientations, and is completely independent from all governments. The educational program includes adult literacy classes, community classes to boost the education of girls in secondary school, and scholarship funds to help young women go to the city for a college degree, as well as counseling and legal support for members experiencing domestic violence. The FEM also offers classes on human sexuality and reproductive health. Members embrace feminism and advocate for women's health to be valued beyond that of childbearing to ensure lifelong health and vibrancy. The FEM also raises awareness about femicide, a phenomenon that unfortunately is on the rise in many Latin American countries, including Nicaragua. It has held publicity campaigns for some emblematic cases, marches in Estelí to raise awareness about violence against women, and has spawned an offshoot organization of young men working for a more peaceful society.

The eight agricultural cooperatives that the FEM runs are part of the **food sovereignty** movement in Nicaragua, in which the country's farmers meet almost all of Nicaragua's needs for basic foodstuffs. FEM cooperatives produce almost everything their members consume, including: basic grains, eggs, chicken, pork, dairy, tropical fruits, a wide variety of vegetables and tubers, herbs, coffee, honey, and the most delicious tea, jelly, and wine made from the hibiscus flower.



The women of the FEM are very proud of the fact that they use **no commercial products** in their growing cycles—this means no pesticides, no chemical fertilizers, and no commercially produced seeds. In fact, the native seed improvement and preservation program is a vital part of cooperative life. When one considers how nitrogen fertilizers contribute to global warming, and how chemical pesticides and GMO seeds are contaminating our food cycle, it is clear that **the women of the FEM are helping to cool and save the planet with their sustainable practices!**

Other important ways to support the people of Nicaragua:

- Contact your member of Congress to say “Stop the Sanctions on Nicaragua!” Sanctions have been known to kill more people than outright war, and the U.N. has declared them to be illegal because they punish an entire population.
- Participate in People-to-People Diplomacy to learn from grassroots activists what is going on in Nicaragua. Join a future delegation of the Friends of the ATC (Nicaraguan Rural Workers Association)! <https://friendsatc.org/>
- Connect with the FEM on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/FundacionEntreMujeres/>

